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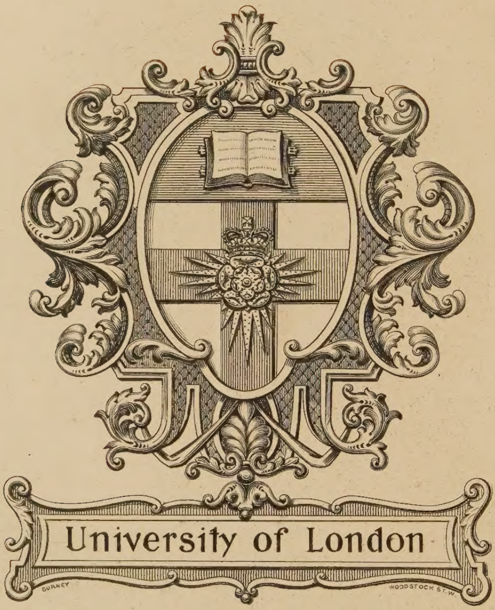

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

AUTHORISED EDITION.

FOURTH SERIES,

COMMENCING WITH THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

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58 VICTORIÆ.

VOLUME XXXI.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM
THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF FEBRUARY
TO
THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF MARCH
1895.

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Hon. W. G. D. Smith,

39127

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> "This House, before voting supplies for the maintenance of Her Majesty's Naval Establishments, seeks an assurance that the Estimates submitted to it with that object by Her Majesty's Government are based upon a consideration of the needs of possible war by sea and land, and upon the consideration of advice tendered in that behalf by the Naval Officer selected for the conduct of the Naval operations in case of war"—(*Mr. Arnold-Forster*)

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Motion made—

"That the Committee of Selection do appoint a Committee, not exceeding nine Members, to whom shall be committed all Private Bills promoted by Municipal and other Local Authorities by which it is proposed to create powers relating to Police and Sanitary Regulations which deviate from, or are in extension of, or are repugnant to, the General Law. That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records, and that three be the quorum of the Committee."—*(Mr. George Russell)*. 862

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ARMY SUPPLY (INDIAN CONTRIBUTION) :—

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> "To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of Question, in order to add the words 'the military appropriations in aid paid by India, in addition to the payment by that Country of the cost of the British Army in India, and of its transport to and from India, are excessive and unjust to India"—*(Mr. Hanbury)*

Instead thereof 1080

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Statute Law Revision Bill.—Resolved—

"That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committe of both Houses of Parliament."—*(Lord Chancellor)* 1142

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"That the Evening Sitting of the House on Tuesday next, and on all subsequent Tuesdays during the present Session, do commence at Half-past Five o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order."—*(Secretary for Foreign Affairs)* 1142

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Vote agreed to 1209
£6,003,000 for Pay and Allowances—Vote agreed to; Resolutions reported 1209

Shop Hours Bill.—Passed through Committee; reported without Amendment; read 3°, and passed 1209
NAVY ESTIMATES—Question, Mr. Sidney Herbert; Answer, Patronage Secretary to the Treasury 1210

EVENING SITTING.

SHRINKAGE OF MARKETS AND BRITISH MANUFACTURERS.

On motion, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair,"

Amendment proposed—

"That, whereas in the opinion of this House, the reduction both at home and abroad of former markets for British commodities by the unfair operation of hostile tariffs and bounties, and the unrestricted importation of the products of competing labour, working under entirely different conditions from those imposed by law and custom in the United Kingdom, is largely answerable for the numbers of unemployed and the diminished earnings of the people in manufacture, agriculture, and shipping, it is the duty of the Government to adopt without delay such measures as may ensure the defence of British industrial interests."—*(Colonel Howard Vincent)* 1210

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[MR. SPEAKER.] 1276

House divided—Ayes 158; Noes 38.—(Division List No. 27.)

Bill presented and read 1^a.

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END OF VOL. II.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*Authorised Edition*)

IN THE

FOURTH SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT* OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET AUGUST 4, 1892, IN THE FIFTY-SIXTH YEAR OF
THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1895.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 28th February 1895.

LARCENY ACT AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the Larceny Act, 1861, with Respect to the Jurisdiction Exercisable in Cases relating to the Receipt of Stolen Property. Presented (Lord Chancellor); read 1^{a}; and to be printed. [No. 26.]

PERJURY BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to consolidate and amend the Law Relating to Perjury and Kindred Offences. Presented (Lord Chancellor); read 1^{a}; and to be printed. [Bill No. 27.]

SWAZILAND.

LORD KNUTSFORD: I should like to ask the Secretary for the Colonies whether he can tell us when we are likely to receive the Swaziland papers. Matters are in rather a critical position there now, and we should be glad to be assured that we shall have them soon.

*__THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES__ (The Marquess of RIPON): I am not surprised that my noble Friend should ask me that question. He knows that the matter is one which is not altogether in the hands of the Colonial Office, or of any of the public offices that lay papers on the table of your lordships' House. I have every reason to hope that the papers will be in the hands of Members of this and of the other House, if not next week, within ten days.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

On the Order for the Second Reading of this Bill,

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON said: About an hour ago my attention was drawn to the fact that the Bill which I have put down for Second Reading to-day is a Bill which comes under the category of those to whose introduction here the House of Commons takes objection. I confess that if it had been a Bill relating to any British matter it would undoubtedly have come within that category, because it relates exclusively to Customs Duties; but it did not strike me that the rule applied to Bills which relate to the Customs Duties to be levied in the Colonies. I have, however, looked into the matter since notice was given to me, and I find from precedents dating back as far as 1840 that this rule has invariably prevailed. There have been introduced into this House Bills in which some of the clauses have related to matters of this sort, and they have been sent down with those clauses marked in red ink; but, unhappily, we cannot take that course with regard to this Bill, because it relates to Customs Duties and to nothing else, and there would be nothing left in the Bill. Therefore I cannot ask your Lordships to adopt that course, and I am afraid I have no alternative except to move that the Order be discharged and the Bill withdrawn.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: I will only venture to say that I do not in the least know whether there is any logical justification for the course taken by the House of Commons, but I must confess that a precedent dating only as far back as 1840 does not impress me with its venerable character. All I wish to do is to enter a protest against the course adopted by the noble Marquess being taken as conforming to this venerable precedent, or as altering the state of things before it came into operation.

Motion agreed to, and Bill withdrawn.

LANDS CLAUSES (TAXATION OF COSTS) BILL.

Bill passed through Committee.

DISTRESS BILL.

Bill passed through Committee.

CONVENTION OF ROYAL BURGHS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1879, AMENDMENT BILL. [No. 28.]

Brought up from the Commons and read 1^a.

The House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes to Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 28th February 1895.

The House met soon after Three of the clock.

CHELSEA WATER (TRANSFER) BILL.

On Motion to postpone the Second Reading of the Chelsea Water (Transfer) Bill,

*Sir F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) said, he objected to the postponing of this Bill. He saw no reason why the County Council should be empowered to use one company in order to invade the district of another. He did not hold a share in these Water Companies, but he had the honour to be Chairman of the Thames Conservancy, which looked on these water Bills as a very serious question. He and those who thought with him were strongly of opinion that these water Bills should proceed *pari passu.* He had no objection to a central authority taking charge of the water supply, but he objected to the County Council being enabled to work one company against another. He wanted all these Bills to be considered by the same Committee. He begged to move that the Bills be now read a second time.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University) said, he was surprised at the line taken by the hon. Member for Shoreditch, who was responsible for the Motion to defer the Second Reading of these Bills till May 3. When he himself moved last week that the whole of the Bills should stand over until the opinion of the ratepayers had been expressed, the hon. Member offered a most determined opposition. These Bills must inevitably lead to a very great increase in the rates, even if the London County Council worked the water undertakings as economically as they were worked at present, which he very much doubted, because the present ratepayers would have not only to pay for the water but for the redemption of stock. To that argument no answer had been attempted by those who supported the Bill. The analogies drawn from the case of other Municipalities were entirely misleading, as there were no other Municipalities to which the Water Companies stood in the same relation as did the London Water Companies to the Metropolis. Another argument which had been put forward was that the authority having the control of the streets should also have the control of the Water Companies, so that there should not be two bodies with the power of opening up the streets. But in the case of London the power of opening up the streets did not rest with the County Council, but generally with the Vestries, so that the argument did not apply.

*MR. SPEAKER said, the question before the House was whether the Second Reading of the Bill should be deferred or now taken.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK said, he would not pursue the argument further, but he had desired to explain to the House why he did not keep down the Amendment standing in his name before. He hoped that the Committee would take into consideration the views, not only of those who represented the Metropolis, but also of those representing districts outside.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said, the Motion which was now made for deferring these Bills was made for the purpose of carrying out a distinct understanding which had been arrived at. Last Thursday he said :—

> "We cannot consent to withdraw Clause 6, but we are prepared to give a *locus standi* to the other Companies on the first Bill, on the understanding that the other Bills will be postponed."

He would not press the understanding if hon. Gentlemen felt that it did not exist, but the 3rd of May was the earliest possible date, he thought, at which the Second Reading of these Bills could be taken. He should put down for Monday a Resolution which would give a *locus standi* on the two Bills to all the Water Companies, and also move for the postponement of the Second Reading of the other Bills until this Bill was gone through. It had been suggested that County Councils should have a *locus standi*, and they had put that also into their proposed Resolution.

*MR. F. G. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) thought that the hon. Member had not answered the speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for Uxbridge. The point was this, did the County Council really intend to proceed with all the eight Bills, or did they intend to postpone the last six for an indefinite period, and having purchased two Companies use those Companies as a lever with which to depreciate the property of the remaining Companies.

MR. STUART said, the only reason for the proposed postponement was that it was impossible to deal with the Bills simultaneously. The County Council could not compete against any Water Company, even if they wished to do so, except with a most minute portion of the Kent Company.

MR. BANBURY said, he understood that it was the distinct intention of the London County Council to proceed with the remaining six Bills, and he understood, also, that the hon. Member for Shoreditch had practically told the House that he would not use the two Bills which had already gone to the Committee in order to exercise any pressure on the remaining six Companies. He understood that that was not the object at all, but that it was simply and solely because it was more convenient to take the first two together.

MR. STUART said, that was so, and they were about to move for a *locus standi* for the other Companies in order that, if their interests were prejudiced in any way, they might have an opportunity of presenting their case before the Committee.

MR. BANBURY said, he was quite satisfied. It was not his wish that the London Water Companies should receive a farthing more than they ought to receive.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND said, that on the clear understanding which had been expressed he would withdraw his Amendment.

CHELSEA WATER (TRANSFER) BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be read a second time on Friday, 3rd May."—(*Mr. James Stuart.*)

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "be," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "now read a second time."—*(Sir Frederick Dixon-Hartland.)*

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Bill to be read a second time upon Friday, 3rd May.

LAMBETH WATER (TRANSFER) BILL.

Motion made and Question proposed,

"That any County Council and any of the London Water Companies be entitled to be heard before the Select Committee on the above Bill on any Petitions praying to be heard by Counsel, presented by them on or before 14th March next, and that such Petitions be referred to the said Committee."—*(Mr. James Stuart.)*

Mr. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.) thought, the 4th of March would not give sufficient time for the County Councils to meet. He suggested that a later date should be fixed, for it was necessary that the Councils should get the Common Seal affixed to their Petitions.

Amendment proposed, after the word "County," to insert the words "or District."—*(Mr. Byrne.)*

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Debate arising—Debate adjourned till Monday next.

Mr. J. STUART recognised the propriety of the request of the hon. Member, and said that the object of the County Council was to afford public bodies directly interested all reasonable opportunity of petitioning and presenting their case. He had reason to believe that if the date in the Motion were extended to the 14th of March it would meet the circumstances of the case, and he would move that that date be substituted for the 4th of March.

Mr. E. W. BYRNE (Essex, Walthamstow) pointed out that there were District Councils very deeply interested in the matter. In the constituency he represented in Essex were two District Councils affecting populations of 78,000 and 60,000 respectively, that would be largely affected by the Bill, and he thought their interests ought to be safeguarded, as well as those of County Councils. He, therefore, moved as an Amendment that District Councils be inserted in the Motion.

Mr. STUART said, the Amendment raised a wide and difficult question. There would already be a large number of petitioners, and it might be inconvenient to extend their number. Still, the County Council would be ready to consider the claims to a hearing of any persons or bodies who could show that they were reasonably entitled to it by their interests being directly affected. The Amendment, however, had been brought to his notice only 10 minutes ago, and he could not assent to it at the moment, but might say that if the hon. Member would confer with him on the matter something might be done at a later stage to meet his views.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said, it would be found that the number of District Councils that desired to be represented were not many; but there were several which were greatly concerned in the matter, and it would be very unfair that they should be shut out.

***Sir J. LUBBOCK** (London University) said, West Kent was more interested in the question than East or Mid Kent, and that it was more important that West Kent should be represented than Kent as a whole.

The UNDER SECRETARY for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said, the proposal of the hon. Member for Shoreditch was a fair one, for he had said that the County Council were anxious that all direct interests should be fairly represented before the Committee. The Committee did not meet until after Easter, and possibly if the point were postponed for a few days the Council might in the meantime be able to do something to meet the wishes of hon. Members with regard to the District Councils, of which, it appeared only a certain number were affected. No prejudice would ensue if the matter were postponed for a few days.

Mr. J. STUART said, he believed the County Council would have no objection to the representation of a District Council in regard to any particular Bill by which it was directly interested.

Mr. VICARY GIBBS (Herts, St. Albans) moved, that the Debate be adjourned until Monday.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS.

ARTILLERY FIRING ON DARTMOOR.

MR. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the inconvenience to the farmers and general public which arises from the possibilities of artillery firing being practised on every day of the week in the summer months on Dartmoor, he will take steps to prevent any artillery firing on Dartmoor on Saturdays?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): Steps have been taken to restrict firing on Saturdays as far as is possible consistently with batteries completing their course of instruction within the period of their encampment. The local notices issued by the military authorities at Dartmoor state that as a rule no firing takes place on Saturday except when there has been much foggy or wet weather during the week. I am informed that it would be impracticable to prohibit entirely firing on Saturday without endangering the success of the programme of instruction for the season. Dartmoor derives many advantages from its military camps, and these advantages must, I fear, have attached to them this one counterbalancing inconvenience, but every care will be taken to reduce it to a minimum.

THE TOWER OF LONDON BARRACKS.

MR. F. W. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the drainage of the barracks in the Tower is of a defective character, and that the drains are in an insanitary condition; and whether he will cause an immediate inspection, with a view to their reconstruction on scientific principles, so as to avoid any dangerous consequences which may arise from the drains remaining in their present state?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: A thorough inspection of the Tower drainage was completed last month, with the result that the system generally was not found to be defective. Some minor defects were detected which are receiving attention.

In answer to a further question by MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON,

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, the inspection was carried out with the assistance of an accomplished professor of sanitary science.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON asked if the right hon. Gentleman knew that some of the sanitary work previously done was imperfectly carried out, that the population of the locality was very dense, and that the health of the people had been injuriously affected by the defective drainage?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, it was true that a small portion of the work of certain alterations which were carried out a short time ago was imperfectly done, but those defects had now been remedied.

PARISH MEETINGS.

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Hereford): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in the case where a parish meeting has had conferred on it all the powers of a parish council, in pursuance of section 19, subsection 10, of the Local Government Act, 1894, the decision on matters that may come before it is to be by a majority of the votes of the members present as at a Parish Council, or whether a poll may be demanded as at a parish meeting?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): It appears to the Local Government Board that any powers of a Parish Council conferred on the parish meeting under section 19 (10) of the Local Government Act, 1894, must be exercised by the parish meeting subject to the rules in part I. of the First Schedule to the Act, and that, consequently, a poll may be demanded of any question to be decided by the meeting in the exercise of such power.

ENGLISH GIRL AT AMSTERDAM.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of that Department has been drawn to the application made at the Worship Street (London) Police Court, on 22nd February, by a girl who stated that, having been induced by erroneous statements to accept a situation at the Café Royal, Amsterdam, and being desirous from what she there discovered to leave at once, she was not permitted by the proprietor to remove her personal property; and, having appealed to the British Consul, Mr. Robinson, was by him referred to the Dutch police authorities, without obtaining justice; whether he has any information from the Consul on the subject; and whether British Consuls have been, or will be, instructed to afford applicants under such circumstances the utmost assistance in their power?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SIR E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The Consul has been asked for a report, and would, in any case, give all the assistance in his power if the circumstances were as stated.

CROFTERS' DOG LICENCES.

SIR DONALD MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if his attention has been called to the grievance of Crofters who are required to pay 7s. 6d. for a licence to keep a dog for the protection of their holdings from the depredations of sheep and cattle who trespass upon their ground and destroy their grass and green crops; and, whether it would be possible to grant a general exemption, instead of leaving the question to be determined by the local Revenue Officer?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): There is no exemption from the Dog License Duty granted by law in favour of Crofters as such. The relief is directed to be given "in the case of dogs kept and used solely for the purpose of tending sheep or cattle on a farm or in the exercise of the calling or occupation of a shepherd." This exemption is interpreted liberally, and the Authorities are always ready to consider cases of individual hardship. It would not be possible to grant such a general exemption as is referred to without an alteration of the law; and on this point I would remind my hon. Friend that the yield of these licences goes into the Local Taxation Fund, not into the Exchequer.

SIR D. MACFARLANE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, if he does not see his way to grant the exemption, whether he will not reduce the rate to very small holders, so that it may bear some proportion to the 7s. 6d. annually paid by the very large farmer?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: As I said, that change would require an alteration of the law, and it would have to go much further than the hon. Member anticipates. There is no reason why, if it should extend to the Crofter, it should not extend to any person in the country having a small holding, or even an allotment.

THE THAMES EMBANKMENT.

MR. F. G. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to the condition of the roadway of the Thames Embankment; and, if he will bring pressure to bear on the London County Council to compel them to put it in proper order?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I think this is a question which the hon. Member may more properly ask his representative on the London County Council to put at the next meeting of that Council.

LONDON CARMEN.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that London carmen are fined, and, in addition, lose a day's wages, for leaving their vans unattended while delivering goods, and that when single handed they cannot in many instances avoid leaving their vans; and, whether he will consider what steps can be taken to put an end to this grievance?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): Section 54, Sub-section 4 of the Metropolitan Police Act, 1839, provides that any person having the care of any cart or carriage, who shall be at such a distance from such cart or carriage as not to have complete control over every horse or other animal drawing the same, shall be liable to summary prosecution and to a fine not exceeding 40s. This seems to me to be a very proper provision for the public safety; the police only take action under the section where the public safety renders proceedings necessary, and I think that any relaxation of the existing Law would not be in the public interest.

CAPTAIN NORTON: I should like to ask the Home Secretary whether he is aware that hundreds upon hundreds of vehicles are left unattended in the streets of London daily; and whether the arbitrary and haphazard selection of a minute proportion of these cases tends either to greater safety in the streets or greater respect for the law; and considering that these cases which come into Court mostly result from inexperienced or over-officious constables, whether he will take into consideration the advisability of sending a circular to the Metropolitan Police suggesting that they should not summon men when they have a chain on the wheel, or when they are only absent for such a time as may be considered reasonable to enable them to deliver goods?

MR. ASQUITH: The principal consideration in this matter is the public safety. I cannot admit either haphazard or arbitrary action on the part of the Police, but if my hon. Friend will bring forward any case of real hardship I will make inquiry in regard to it.

THE NIGER PROTECTORATE.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will cause to be supplied in the Tea Room or Library, a map setting out the boundaries dividing the territories of the Niger Coast Protectorate and of the Royal Niger Company; and, whether he will permit a Return to be presented to the House setting out a comparative statement of duties now existing in the territories of the Niger Coast Protectorate, the Royal Niger Company in Lagos and the Gold Coast, and the German Tariff in the Cameroons.

SIR E. GREY: A map will be supplied. A comparative statement of Import Duties in the Niger Coast Protectorate, Niger Company's Territories, Lagos, Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone will be found in Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance, No. 1,144, pp. 21–22. There have been no changes since which would affect the value of this statement for purposes of comparison. We have not got a recent list of the Cameroons Tariff.

THE ZETLAND PIER AT ADRIGOLE.

MR. J. P. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that the Zetland Pier, built at Adrigole as a relief work in 1891, at a cost of £5,000, is being constantly covered by the spring tides, and that a great portion of the work is being washed away; and, whether he intends to take any steps to prevent the injury being done to this pier by the spring tides?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am informed that some of the gravel inside the pier referred to was washed away recently, but that the injury is very slight and no damage was done to the concrete. The matter has been brought under the notice of the county surveyor.

CARRYING ARMS IN IRELAND.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that a man named Ned Brady, of Ballinaglera, County Leitrim, who was convicted of assault at last petty sessions in Dowra, and placed under a rule of bail, holds a licence to carry arms; and, will he order inquiry to be made as to whether Brady is a proper person to possess a licence to carry arms?

MR. J. MORLEY: My attention has been drawn to the circumstances leading to the conviction in this case, and I am inquiring into the matter referred to at the end of the question.

THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Congested Districts Board has recently launched a new steam yacht at a cost of £10,000 for cruising about the west coast of Ireland; what was the sum allowed by the Treasury for a steam cruiser for the west coast of Scotland; and what is the value of the fish caught on these coasts respectively; has he observed the statement in the Board's Reports that the cost of administration of their income of £45,000 a year amounts to close on £9,000 a year; and would he state what is the amount given by the Treasury for defraying the salaries of secretary, assistant secretary, and staff of clerks, and how many of the latter are there; will he furnish a Return of the items of administration as passed by the Auditor General, and especially of the sum of £1,367 5s. 5d. for an expenditure of £1,589 10s. in connection with the Irish Reproductive Loan Fund, and of £768 13s. 4d. for an expenditure of £957 10s. 4d. for piers, roads, bridges, &c.; is it intended to allow the expenditure of £9,000 a year of the Board's income being spent on a stud farm in County Wicklow; is it the case that the Board has given £600 for the improvement of the town of Donegal, which is not in a congested area; and will he state the terms of the contracts which have been entered into for the approaches and ironwork of the viaduct over the Gweebara Estuary in County Donegal; and, are cheques signed by members of the Board, and how are powers of surcharge exercised by the Auditor General?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I would ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone this question until after the next meeting of the Congested Districts Board to be held on the 15th March.

ENGLISH GIRLS AT AMSTERDAM.

Mr. H. J. WILSON (York, W. R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his attention has been directed to a statement made by Annie Nightingale to Mr. Bushby at the Worship Street Police Court on Friday last, indicating a system of sending girls to the Continent for immoral purposes by an agent in York Road, Waterloo Road; whether he has caused inquiry to be made into the facts; and, whether he can inform the House what means, if any, are taken, or can be taken, to prevent such a traffic from being carried on.

Mr. ASQUITH: As I said in reply to a question on this subject on Tuesday last, the police are making a thorough inquiry into the case, and I must defer my answer till I get their report.

THE IRISH TELEGRAPH SERVICE.

Mr. F. A. O'KEEFFE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, if his attention has been directed to the circumstances of a late appointment of a second class telegraphist, transferred from Killarney to the city of Limerick, and promoted to a first class appointment over the heads of the whole of the second class staff in that city; what were the special reasons and recommendations for such appointment; if the Limerick staff have protested against such practice of introducing outside officers over their heads; and, if further inquiry will be made in the matter, with a view that the claims of the local officials for promotion will not be ignored, and that no such further appointments be made.

***The POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. Arnold Morley, Nottingham, E.): The telegraphist to whom the hon. Member refers was transferred from the Killarney staff to a vacancy at Limerick caused by the promotion of a first class telegraphist from that office to a clerkship at Killarney. The staff at Limerick have appealed against this exchange, which was necessary in the interests of the Service, but, I think, without good reason, as one of their number has been promoted to a more valuable appointment at Killarney.

GUATEMALAN DEBT.

Mr. W. F. LAWRENCE; I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether his attention has been called to the non-payment, since July last, of interest on the External Debt of the Republic of Guatemala; whether he is aware that the sum arising from the duties specially allocated to the payment of debt has been impounded under the pleas of the depreciation of silver, that the Government is constructing railways and telegraphs, and that generally the country is very prosperous; and, what steps, if any, Her Majesty's Consul General has taken to urge the Government to pay the interest due to its creditors?

Sir E. GREY: Attention has been called to the suspension of the service of the Guatemalan External Debt. Mr. Gosling, Her Majesty's Minister in Guatemala, has been instructed by telegraph to inform the Guatemalan Government that the Council of Foreign Bondholders urge that a commissioner should be sent at once to this country to treat with the bondholders, a mode of proceeding that seems well calculated to bring about a settlement. Mr. Gosling has also been authorised to recommend, unofficially, that the Guatemalan Government should come to terms with the British creditors, and he has been authorised to present a letter addressed to the President of Guatemala by the chairman of the Council of Foreign Bondholders urging that a representative should be despatched to England, or that the President himself should make a reasonable proposal to the bondholders.

ENGINE-ROOM ARTIFICERS.

MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, whether any steps have been, or are being, taken to advance duly qualified engine-room artificers to the position and rank of warrant officers; and, if so, what steps have been taken in this direction; whether he can state to the House why candidates from amongst the ranks of the engine-room artificers were not allowed to compete for the position of temporary service engineers, a body now wholly drawn from outside sources; and, whether the Board of Admiralty will consider the advisability of instituting an intermediate grade of engineer artificers who shall occupy the status of assistant engineers, with avenues to promotion according to merit, upon passing the ordinary examination suitable to such rank?

*THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): The inquiries made by the hon. Member on the subject of the present status and rank of engine-room artificers cannot be conveniently dealt with in the limited scope of an answer to a question. I will therefore ask him to wait until the Navy Estimates come on for discussion in the House. I may, however, state that the hon. Member is under a misapprehension as to engine-room artificers not being allowed to compete for the appointment of temporary service engineers. Provided that an engine-room artificer possesses the qualifications laid down in the Regulations for the entry of these engineers, the Admiralty have no wish to discourage them from entering into competition with other candidates whenever the convenience of the Service allows of it.

THE METROPOLITAN CAB SERVICE.

MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has considered the Report of the Committee on the Cab Service of the Metropolis; and whether he is prepared to take steps to carry out the administrative and legislative changes recommended; and, if so, when the former will come into operation?

MR. ASQUITH: I am in communication with the Commissioner of Police on the subject of the administrative changes. He has the matter under immediate consideration, but has not as yet been able to furnish his report. I hope in the course of the Session to introduce a Bill to deal with the practice known as "bilking."

SHOT FIRING IN MINES.

MR. J. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, having regard to the proved danger to life of the manner in which shot firing is now carried on in many coal-mines, and the investigation, report, and recommendations of the Royal Commission on Explosions from Coal Dust in Mines, he is prepared to introduce and press forward a Bill dealing with the subject?

MR. ASQUITH: I have prepared a Bill dealing with fiery and dusty mines and with the precautions to be taken in firing shots in mines. The recommendations of the Royal Commission have been attended to in framing the Bill, and I hope to introduce it at an early date.

MALA REAL PORTUGUEZA COMPANY.

MR. J. PARKER-SMITH (Lanark, Partick): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the Mala Real Portugueza Company, which became bankrupt nearly two years ago owing some hundreds of pounds to the British engineers in its service, has been spending considerable sums out of its funds in Court, but has refused to satisfy the claims of the men in its employ; and that the British Minister at Lisbon has recently given orders to the lawyers he engaged to proceed no further in pushing the claims of the engineers; what is the reason of this action; and whether Her Majesty's Government is able to do anything to assist the men in question in recovering the wages due to them?

Sir E. GREY: It is unfortunately true that owing to the methods pursued in the administration of bankrupt estates by the Portuguese tribunals the creditors of the Mala Real Company have as yet received nothing, and that among those creditors are a number of British engineers who were in the Company's employ. The case has throughout been watched with care by the British Minister at Lisbon; the employment of a lawyer has been discontinued, as it did not seem that for the present his services were likely to be of use, but Her Majesty's Minister will take any opportunity that may offer of pressing the men's claims. The delay which is occurring is highly discreditable, but as the matter is in the hands of the Judicial Authorities, and the legal remedies of the claimants are not exhausted, it is difficult to make out a proper case for diplomatic rapresentations.

THE OUTBREAK AT BRASS.

***Sir C. W. DILKE** (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether, in view of Sir Claude Macdonald's statement, that the Brass Natives have been deprived of their means of subsistence by the action of the Niger Company, and in view of the present Military operations and total destruction of the Brass towns, he will cause immediate inquiry to be made into the alleged practice of "sniping" or shooting British-protected Brass Natives at sight when they make use of those creeks of the delta of the Niger, through which the whole of their trade has been conducted from time immemorial, and thus reach the territories of the Niger Company; and, whether it would be possible to avoid the present difficulties on the frontier of the British protectorate, and that of the territory of the Niger Company in the delta of the Niger, by forming of them a single Customs' territory without any intervening Customs' barrier, in such manner that one duty shall be levied within them, as provided in the somewhat similar case of the Gold Coast Colony and German Togoland by the 1894 Convention?

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Before the hon. Gentleman answers that question, may I ask him whether it is not a fact that the recent affray was in consequence of an attempt to introduce intoxicating drink into the country, contrary to the regulations of the Royal Niger Company?

Sir E. GREY: The first paragraph of the question conveys a very grave accusation, which cannot be entertained without some evidence. The whole question of the outbreak—who was responsible for it, how the arms of precision were supplied to the natives, and how just grievances can be remedied, will be fully considered when details are received. In answer to the supplementary question, I am aware that the statement which the hon. Member has just made has been made by others, but that, of course, will be inquired into when the inquiry is made to which I have referred.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): May I ask whether the inquiry will be conducted in England, or on the spot?

Sir E. GREY: On the spot, certainly.

BELLEVILLE BOILERS.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON: On behalf of the hon. Member for East Belfast (Mr. Wolff): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, how many Belleville boilers are fitted in the *Sharpshooter*; can he state how long ago they were fitted, and how often they have been worked; and, what is the greatest number of consecutive hours they have worked at a time?

***Mr. E. ROBERTSON**: The *Sharpshooter* was fitted with eight Belleville boilers twelve months ago, and these were first tried on board under steam, in February, 1894. Seventeen steam trials were made at various powers and durations up to 30 hours. The ship was commissioned in September 1894, and whilst on service with the Channel Squadron, has made two special twelve-hour trials, and the usual quarterly 24-hour trial, and the result, as regards the Belleville boilers, has in each case been most satisfactory.

PRIVATE BILLS PROCEDURE IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. W. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, if it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill for the reform of Private Bill Procedure in Scotland; and, if so, if they have resolved to press it forward and pass it into law, during the present Session?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Government have prepared a Bill for the reform of Private Procedure in Scotland, which they will introduce, and hope to pass into law.

THE SCOTCH STANDING COMMITTEE.

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is the intention of the Government during the present Session to take steps for the setting up of a Scottish Standing Committee, similar to that which last year so successfully dealt with the Committee stage of the Local Government (Scotland) Bill?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: The Standing Committee for the consideration of Scottish business, as finally arranged by the House last Session, did such excellent service, that the Government will propose its re-appointment in the same terms as last year. This will be done as soon as a suitable Bill has reached a stage in the House appropriate to its being referred to the Standing Committee.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigtownshire) said, that when the right hon. Gentleman proposed the Motion he should feel it his duty to oppose it, because it was unreasonable to suppose than any hon. Member could be in more than one place at the same time.

MR. PARKER SMITH asked whether the right hon. Gentleman could say what Bills the Government would consider suitable for reference to the Committee?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN said he could not do so at the present moment. When a Bill arrived at a particular stage he might perhaps propose to refer it to the Committee.

BEHRING SEA ARBITRATION.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give any further information as to the appropriation by Congress, before its rising, of the moneys necessary for the payment of the sum of 425,000 dols. agreed to by the Government of the United States under the Behring Sea Arbitration Award as compensation to British sealers?

SIR E. GREY: A telegram has been received from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Washington, reporting that, on the 25th instant, the proposed appropriation for the payment of 425,000 dols. as compensation to British sealers had been rejected in the House of Representatives by an adverse vote of 143 to 112.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL asked, whether the hon. Gentleman had any information as to further steps being taken by the Government of the United States?

SIR E. GREY was not sure whether this rejection was absolutely final, but if it was final, of course the claims would have to be inquired into by the Commission in detail.

MR. W. R. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is now in a position to state the total amount of liabilities incurred by this country in the Behring Sea Arbitration; whether the whole amount was paid by this country; and, if any portion of the costs were paid by the Canadian Government, will he state what that proportion was?

SIR E. GREY: The total amount of expenses paid by this country was £36,661 15s. 4d. This, however, includes payments to be shared by the Canadian Government; but the accounts with Canada have not yet been finally adjusted. As soon as they have been settled a Return will be laid.

PARCEL POST BASKETS.

MR. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, under existing regulations, the repairs of Parcels Post baskets in use in Ireland are now executed at the Telegraph Factory in London; and whether arrangements could be made under which the work could be done in Dublin?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: Under existing regulations the simple repairs to Parcel Post receptacles in use in Ireland are executed at the General Post Office, Dublin, but the heavier repairs are executed at the Telegraph Factory, London. I have, however, given instructions that all repairs to these baskets which can be conveniently so executed shall, for the future, be executed in Dublin.

LIVERPOOL PRISON—DEPUTY GOVERNOR.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Liverpool, West Derby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if it is intended, in response to the urgent requests made by the Visiting Committee of Her Majesty's prison at Liverpool, in their Reports for the years 1893 and 1894, to renew the appointment left vacant in 1890, of a Deputy Governor to the prison?

Mr. ASQUITH: I am in communication with the Treasury with a view to the appointment of a Deputy Governor at Liverpool prison.

SAVING LIFE AT SEA.

Mr. E. H. BAYLEY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a schooner, the *Forest Oak*, was wrecked off the coast of Essex on Wednesday, 16th January, and the crew rescued in an exhausted condition by the volunteer lifeboat, *True to the Core*, but that the lifeboat crew have received no compensation, whereas the crew of the National Institution boat, which arrived too late to be of service, have received £2 5s. each; and, whether the Board of Trade will grant a reward to the crew of the *True to the Core?*

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. J. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): My attention has been called to the case to which my hon. Friend refers, and the Board of Trade are making inquiries with a view to deciding whether it is a proper one for reward. I am not aware whether the crew of the National Lifeboat Institution boat have received any reward. That is a matter entirely for the institution itself. They have received nothing from the Board of Trade.

POST OFFICE CLERKSHIPS.

Mr. S. HOARE (Norwich): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he could state the system under which sorters are promoted to clerkships in the Post Office; and, whether, in such promotions, seniority and long service are taken into consideration?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: Promotion to clerkships from the position of sorting clerk in the Post Office is regulated on the general principles which govern promotion throughout the Department. The promotion is given to the officer who, having regard to all the circumstances of the case—among which seniority and long service are always taken into consideration—appears to be thoroughly qualified and most deserving of the vacant situation.

THE DEPTFORD VICTUALLING YARD.

Mr. C. J. DARLING (Deptford): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether a petition from the coopers employed in the Victualling Yard at Deptford was received in November; what answer has been made to it; and whether it is intended at once to make any change for their advantage in the terms of employment of these men?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: A petition has been received from the coopers at Deptford. The decision of the Admiralty thereon, arrived at after full consideration, will be shortly communicated to the yard, when the other petitions have been settled.

Mr. C. J. DARLING: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it is the intention of the Government to pay to their employés. especially to those employed in the victualling yard at Deptford, a minimum wage of 24s. a week; and whether, if the men desire it, such a wage would be paid on their giving up the present privileges, bonus, and allowances?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: The minimum wage at present in force was settled as part of the general scheme of wages at the Government yards in 1893, and the Admiralty have no present intention of altering the same. The second part of the question being hypothetical, is not one which can be properly answered.

THE CASE OF DR. MOFFETT.

Mr. DAVID PLUNKET (Dublin University): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether Dr. Moffett was in October last called upon by the Irish Government to resign his offices as President of and Professor in the Queen's College, Galway, on the ground that the Order in Council of 15th August 1890, applied to him as holder of such offices; whether Dr. Moffett declined to tender his resignation, stating that he was advised by high legal authority, including the late Law Officers of the Crown in Ireland, that the Order in Council did not apply to his case, and praying that an opportunity might be afforded to him of trying the question before a legal tribunal; whether, on the 24th of January of this year, a Queen's letter was sent to Dr. Moffett, dismissing him from his offices of President and Professor; whether before such letter takes effect (namely, on the 25th of next month), the Government will refer the question raised by Dr. Moffett to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; or, if they are not prepared to take that course, they will institute inquiry whether the case of Presidents and Professors of the Queen's Colleges is within the policy of the Order; and whether the Order in its present form ought to apply to such cases?

MR. J. MORLEY: In answer to the right hon. Gentleman, I have to say that the Government consider the proposed or suggested reference to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as impracticable. The technical possibility of such a reference is open to some doubt, and, even if it were otherwise, the Government consider that in any case to authorise or to institute such a reference would be to set a very bad precedent. But as there appears to me to be some question as to the policy of the Order, as distinguished from the terms of the Order, regarding which there is no doubt, the Lord Chancellor will examine into the merits of this question, and by the decision at which he arrives the Government will abide.

Mr. PLUNKET asked whether he was to understand that the whole question would be referred to the Lord Chancellor, with a view to ascertaining what were the real intentions of the Commission?

Mr. J. MORLEY said the Order in Council, though no doubt to some extent influenced by the report of the Commission, was an order of her Majesty; and, that being so, it could be examined by the Lord Chancellor without reference to the Ridley or any other Commission.

Mr. PLUNKET: How, then does the right hon. gentleman propose to throw light upon the intention of the Order?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Order stands upon its own footing. No doubt the Ridley Commission had an influence in the framing of that Order, but the Order itself is a document not to be interpreted by any other order.

Mr. PLUNKET asked how soon the right hon. gentleman would be able to obtain information on this subject.

Mr. J. MORLEY said that no time would be lost in the matter.

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) asked whether there was to be a specific and definite question referred to the Lord Chancellor—namely, whether the Order applied to such an office as was held by Dr. Moffett.

Mr. J. MORLEY said the whole policy of the Order, and that was a comprehensive term, would be referred to the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. R. M. DANE (Fermanagh, N.) asked whether the Lord Chancellor had expressed the opinion that the order did not apply to offices of this description, and did not apply to Sir Thomas Brady?

Mr. J. MORLEY did not reply.

THE LOSS OF THE "ELBE."

Mr. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he can inform the House what court will inquire into the loss of the steamship *Elbe*; whether that court will be competent to judge of the many intricate and important technical questions that may arise in the evidence accounting for this disaster; and, whether he can state the probable date and place of the inquiry.

MR. BRYCE: An inquiry into the loss of the German steamship *Elbe* has already been opened at Bremerhaven. The Board of Trade have ordered a formal investigation into the circumstances of the damages sustained by the British steamship *Crathie*. This latter inquiry will be held before a magistrate and competent nautical assessors—a court specially constituted by the Merchant Shipping Act to deal with such cases. The inquiry will be held in London, but the date cannot be determined until after the conclusion of the coroner's inquest, which now stands adjourned.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) asked, whether a nautical assessor had been appointed. He had been informed that an incompetent would be required owing to the failure of last year's crop. Londonderry was not one of these unions. From parts of this county strong remonstrances were raised against the prohibition of potatoes exported to Malta, and it was represented that the crop was generally a good one. I may also mention that this union did not apply for a loan under the Seed Act of 1890. In accordance, however, with the request of the Guardians, copies of the circular and rules have now been sent to them.

RUSSIAN MISSION TO ABYSSINIA.

Sir ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information as to the object and proceedings of the Russian Mission to Abyssinia?

Sir E. GREY: Her Majesty's Government have been informed that the expedition is not official or connected with the Russian Government, but has been sent by the St. Petersburg Geographical Society for scientific purposes. M. Leontier, a celebrated traveller, is the head of the expedition, assisted by several scientific officers, and accompanied by a Russian Archimandrite, who may very possibly be charged with some religious mission from the Russian Ecclesiastical authorities. The expedition went to Constantinople, thence to Cairo, from which place it is understood that they proceed to Oboka en route for Harrar.

THE PIER OF WICKLOW HARBOUR.

Mr. J. SWEETMAN (Wicklow, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that a serious breach has been made in the pier of Wicklow Harbour during recent gales; whether he is aware that an expenditure of several thousand pounds is absolutely necessary to save the harbour and present the total loss of some £40,000 already spent on the harbour by the locality; and whether, seeing that the locality is unable of itself to advance any more money, Her Majesty's Government will propose a grant from the public funds for this harbour, which is a harbour of refuge for coasting vessels as well as being of great benefit to the locality?

Sir J. HIBBERT: It is true that damage was done by recent gales to the pier in Wicklow Harbour, which for some time past has shown signs of weakness. Considerable expenditure will in all probability be required to place the harbour in a satisfactory condition. The Harbour Commissioners have had plans prepared for the purpose and are in communication with the Board of Works on the subject, but the question of the provision of money for executing the needful work is not yet ripe for arrangement. I cannot, however, admit that the locality is unable to advance any more money, especially as the negotiations have proceeded on the opposite basis.

ZULULAND AND NATAL.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Dinizulu, Tchingaan, and others have yet been released?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): No, Sir, they have not yet been released.

COMMANDER BETHELL reminded the hon. Member that two and a-half years had elapsed since the present Government undertook to favourably consider the release.

Mr. BUXTON replied that arrangements were made for the return of the chiefs to the interior, but the Natal Government unfortunately objected, on the ground that Zululand should first be incorporated with Natal before the release took place. The British Government did not consider the present time opportune to attach Zululand to Natal. Unquestionably, Zululand would be attached to Natal when it ceased to be a Crown colony. Under the circumstances, the chiefs were not being allowed to return.

POLLING-PLACES IN COUNTY DONEGAL.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether any and what steps have been taken in compliance with the provisions of Section 18 of the Ballot Act and Section 9 of the Act 27–8 Vic., c. 22, to carry out the Order in Council confirming the establishment of new polling-places in County Donegal, which were published about a month ago; and whether he will take steps to secure that the law is obeyed?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have not received sufficient information to enable me to reply to the question to-day, and will therefore ask my hon. and learned Friend to repeat it to-morrow.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN THE DERRY UNION.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) Whether he is aware that, of the two sanitary authorities within the Derry Union, the urban seeks to throw upon the rural the burden of providing for the poorer classes of persons afflicted with infectious diseases; (2) whether he is also aware that the urban sanitary authority recently erected a hospital entirely isolated, which is to be used only for better-to-do persons; (3) and whether the Local Government Board can take any steps to prevent the urban authority refusing to take the poor into their own hospital because they are poor?

MR. J. MORLEY: (1) It is the duty of a Board of Guardians, as the guardians of the poor, to make provision for the treatment of the sick poor suffering from infectious disease within their district. They cannot transfer any share of this responsibility to the urban authority. (2) the Londonderry Urban Authority have, under section 155 of the Public Health Act, provided a hospital for the treatment of patients suffering from infectious disease within their district, but they can determine the class of persons they will admit to such hospital. (3) The Local Government Board cannot take any steps as suggested by my hon. Friend in the third paragraph, but it is open to the Guardians, as a Rural Sanitary Authority, to approach the Urban Authority and endeavour to make an arrangement with them under the section above referred to, to admit poor persons to their hospital in terms to be agreed to by both authorities.

MANUFACTURE OF CORDITE IN INDIA.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the cordite plant sent to India has been successful in producing reliable cordite; whether the use of cordite manufactured in India is considered satisfactory by the authorities there; and, will he lay upon the table any correspondence thereon?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (MR. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): (1) So far as I am aware the cordite plant has not yet been erected. (2) No cordite has been manufactured in India. (3) The question as to the manufacture of cordite in India is still under consideration, and I cannot undertake at present to lay the correspondence on the Table of the House.

THE INDIAN ARMY.

MR. R. W. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, what is the estimated amount in rupees of the charge laid upon the Indian Exchequer during the coming financial year for the training of troops in this country, in addition to the cost of the whole of the troops in India itself, and all the charges connected with their passage to and from India; and whether it is intended to reduce this amount, which last year was nearly £600,000.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: The capitation rate payable to the War Office for recruiting, depot and other charges in respect of the British Forces serving in India, was fixed by Lord Northbrook's Commission in 1892 at £7. 10s. per head. By agreement between the India Office and the Treasury that rate has been continued, and I expect will be maintained during the coming financial year, and the amount would be £548,250. The question whether the capitation rate should be increased or reduced is one of the matters to be considered in the forthcoming inquiry.

MR. R. W. HANBURY: Has an arbitrator been appointed?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: No, the Government have agreed to appoint a Royal Commission.

COST OF STATE DEPARTMENTS.

MR. R. W. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether it is the fact that, while the Colonial Office costs British taxpayers about £40,000, the Foreign Office about £67,000, and the Treasury about £60,000 annually, the India Office alone, besides the expenses of Government in India, costs about £130,000 a year to the India Exchequer; to whom are the detailed accounts of the India Office presented; and whether he will lay upon the Table an Estimate of the Annual Expenses, Salaries, &c., of the India Office, similar to those showing the cost of the other Departments of the State?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I cannot admit that there is any analogy between the expenses of the Offices to which the hon. Member refers and the expenses of the India Office, which include the Civil and Military, Financial, Political, Judicial and Public Works Departments of the whole Indian Empire. The accounts are presented to and are audited by the Auditor of Indian Home Accounts, and when audited are laid before Parliament. An Estimate of the cost of the India Office is annually laid on the Table of the House.

THE EDUCATION CODE.

Mr. J. PARKER SMITH: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in view of the limited period during which discussion of the Education Code is possible under the Rules of the House, he will undertake not to present that Code to the House until it is ready for circulation to Members?

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: At the same time that the Code is presented it will be placed in the hands of the Officers of the House for distribution. The arrangements for this cannot be made until it appears in the Votes, but not more than three or four days ought to elapse before distribution.

COLONIAL RAILWAY SURVEYS.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he is in a position to inform the House at whose cost the surveys for railways at Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, and also at Lagos, have been made; and if they are made at the expense of this country, is it with the view of those railways being constructed under an Imperial guarantee by the Colonial Government or by private enterprise?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: In each case the whole cost is defrayed from Colonial funds.

ARMENIAN INQUIRY.

Mr. F. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of the Foreign Office has been called to the despatch contained in *The Daily Telegraph* of the 27th inst., from the special correspondent of that journal at Mush, confirming from trustworthy evidence, in their essential features, the accounts of the outrages committed in the Sasun district; whether note has been taken of the statements that long before the delegates arrived, and when Consul Hallward was endeavouring to reach Sassoon, efforts were made by the authorities, especially by the responsible military commander, Zekki Pasha, to conceal all traces of the massacre, the very occurrence of which Zekki persistently denied; that an attempt was made to obliterate the pit dug behind the house of a village chief of Djellyegoozan, in which hundreds of mutilated bodies lay piled on each other, and that numerous witnesses have been on various pretexts imprisoned or conveyed to distant places under Turkish supervision; whether it is true that the inquiry is expected in official quarters to last at least two months yet; and whether in view of the urgent necessity for securing the safety of the Christian population, having regard especially to the threats of an impending massacre during the month of Ramazan, which begins at the end of February, and on the strength of the information already in possession of the Foreign Office on the subject of the prevailing misgovernment and oppression in Armenia, Her Majesty's Government will forthwith take steps, in concert with such of the Powers as are chiefly concerned, to bring such pressure to bear upon the Porte as will lead to the immediate introduction of reforms under European supervision, in accordance with Treaty obligations?

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT wished, before the hon. Baronet answered, to ask whether it was a fact that the telegram in Wednesday's *Daily Telegraph* purporting to have been sent from Mush on February 23, *via* Kars, was received in England on February 26; whether Kars was 345 kilomètres from Mush, and eight days' journey in good weather by rapid courier from Mush; and whether, under those circumstances, the telegram could possibly have been received in the way stated.

SIR E. GREY: A copy of this article has been sent to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, but I cannot express any opinion upon the statements contained in it pending the progress of the inquiry. It is not probable, considering the difficulties of travelling, that the work of the Commission can be finished before the period mentioned. Her Majesty's Government will, in the meanwhile, do all that is possible, in conjunction with other Governments, who may be ready to assist, to urge upon the Porte the adoption of proper measures whenever necessary for the protection of the Christian population. The question of the introduction of reforms is fully kept in mind, but it cannot be treated with advantage except upon complete and authentic information.

THE SUZERAINTY OF THE TRANSVAAL.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether Her Majesty's Government have now received the words of President Krüger's speech, in which, at the German banquet on 26th January, he repudiated the suzerainty of the Queen; whether the Boer President then said that he came to England in 1884, and that the then British Government had the suzerainty altered; that previously the Boer President could not enter into any treaties with other countries without Her Majesty's consent, but that the British Government in 1884 altered the Treaty and relinquished the suzerainty; whether the Queen's suzerainty has been abrogated in any Treaty or public document; and whether Her Majesty's Government have sent a formal protest against these assertions of President Krüger?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: We have received the local newspapers containing reports of President Krüger's speech of January 26th. As regards the question of suzerainty, it is a somewhat doubtful question as to what extent the suzerainty, created under the Convention of 1881, was continued by the Convention of 1884. But the matter is not one of much importance, inasmuch as the essence of the suzerainty was contained in Clause 4 of the Convention of 1884, which deals with the external relations of the South African Republic. This clause remains in full and effective force; and, as I have stated on two occasions lately in the House, under Article 4 of the London Convention of 1884, the South African Republic, as regards its foreign relations, is, and remains, within the sphere of British influence, and can conclude no Treaty or engagement with any state or nation (with the exception of the Orange Free State) until the same has been submitted to Her Majesty the Queen for Her approval. This statement, made in the House of Commons and on the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government, appears to us to be a sufficient notice of President Krüger's speech made on the social occasion in question.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER asked, whether any compensation had been paid to British subjects resident in the Transvaal who were commandeered and sent to the front on the authority of the Boer Government?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said, he did not think this arose out of the question. If the hon. Member would give notice of the matter he would attend to it.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said the hon. Gentleman had not answered whether the Queen's suzerainty had been abrogated by any Treaty or public document.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON repeated that it was a matter of doubt whether the Convention of 1884 had not superseded the preamble and the clauses of the Convention of 1881.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Does not the hon. Gentleman know whether there is a suzerainty or not?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have already stated the question about which there is doubt. But, as regards the practical question, really the only matter of any importance is fully confirmed by Clause 4 of the Convention of 1884, which we certainly intend to uphold.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

MR. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has received a letter from the Rev. Arthur Symonds, Rector of St. James, Stockport, with reference to the refusal of the Stockport Magistrates to commit Church of England children to industrial schools other than the Stockport Industrial School, which has been closed by the committee to Church of England children. Whether he is aware that Colonel Turner and other Magistrates refused, on 18th September 1894, to commit a boy named Charles Edward Briscoe, who had been remanded three times in order that an industrial school might be found willing to receive him, although the Essex Industrial School was willing to receive him; and, whether he will take such steps as may be necessary to secure that no difference shall be made by the Stockport Magistrates on account of religion in the administration of the law.

MR. H. H. ASQUITH: I received Mr. Symonds' letter, which I referred to the Magistrates. In reply I received an intimation from Colonel Turner that the reason for not committing Charles Briscoe was because the Magistrates did not consider it a fit case for an Industrial School, but that the Guardians of the Poor were the proper authority to take charge of him. There appear to be some differences of opinion between Mr. Symonds and Colonel Turner, but it is not necessary to go into these matters, in view of the reason assigned by Colonel Turner for the Magistrates' decision, with which I have no power to interfere.

UNEMPLOYED AT GLOUCESTER.

SIR T. ROBINSON (Gloucester): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that the Gloucester Board of Guardians have decided upon opening a stoneyard in order to find temporary work for the unemployed, half the cost of which is to be paid to the men in cash, and the other half in goods; and whether this payment will disfranchise any voters receiving it; if so, whether he has any power to prevent this disfranchisement; or, if not, will he bring in a short Bill giving him the power to do so under certain exceptional circumstances?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Local Government Board have not been informed by the Gloucester Board of Guardians of their decision to open a stoneyard with the view to a labour test for adult able-bodied persons in receipt of outdoor relief, but I have no reason to doubt that the fact is as stated in the question. The receipt of relief from the Guardians, although accompanied by a labour test, will disqualify persons for the Parliamentary Franchise. Until the Committee on Distress from Want of Employment have made their Report, I feel unable to give an answer on the question as to disfranchisement.

THE NEW CODE.

MR. H. J. WILSON: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether any addition to, or alteration in, the Building Rules of the new Code of this year affect existing schools, either Board or voluntary; and whether they will add to the expense of new schools that may be built in the future?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The additions and alterations in the Building Rules of the new Code only affect new buildings or enlargements, and do not apply to existing schools, whether Board or voluntary. The changes are few and of an unimportant character, and are mainly rather by way of suggestion than compulsory. The Consulting Architect of the Department, by whose advice they were made, states that they will in no way add to the expense of new schools or enlargements. I may call attention to one change, which requires that the doors of schools shall open outwards. In view of the possibility of panics or fire, now that evening meetings in many schools are very frequent, it is desirable that this rule should be applied to all schools as far as possible.

ENDOWMENTS IN WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE.

MR. S. T. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN: On behalf of the hon. Member for Chester (Mr. R. A. Yerburgh), I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will grant the Return of Dissenting Endowments in Wales and Monmouthshire which stands on this day's Paper?

MR. H. H. ASQUITH: I was asked last Session by the hon. Member for the Oswestry Division of Shropshire if the Government would assent to a Return of Dissent Endowments in England and

Wales, and, on the ground that the information could only be obtained at an expense and trouble out of all proportion to its value, and without any adequate security as to its trustworthiness, I informed him that the Government did not see their way to his Motion. I am afraid I must give the same answer to the hon. Member who puts this question.

MR. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN asked whether the right hon. Gentleman did not think that such a Return would be most valuable this Session, when the Welsh Disestablishment Bill was being pressed forward?

MR. ASQUITH: The question is whether it would be trustworthy.

PARCEL POST RATES.

*MR. WALTER HAZELL (Leicester): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the rates for parcel post in some great Continental countries are much lower than in the United Kingdom, that in some cases they are not above one-third of the charges here; and whether, having regard to the public convenience, and the necessity for facilitating the traffic in small farm produce, and of the need for increased employment for a large number of persons, he will consider the advisability of decreasing the present scale of parcel post charges?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: The minimum charge for parcels in this country is much lower than the minimum rate in nearly every other country, but as the rates abroad rise by kilogrammes, whereas they rise here by pounds, heavier parcels are carried more cheaply abroad than here. In two or three instances, foreign rates may be found which, in the case of the heavier parcels, are not above one-third of the rates in this country. The late Government considered the question of introducing a lower scale of charges, chiefly with the view of facilitating the traffic in agricultural produce, but they did not take any steps in this direction. I should myself be indisposed to establish preferential rates, and the time does not appear to me to have come for a general reduction of the tariff. The chief difficulty in the way of a reduction in this country lies in the large payments which the Post Office is compelled to make to the Railway Companies under the Agreement made in 1884, which does not expire for several years.

INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES.

MR. NAOROJI (Finsbury, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has any reason to doubt the statement in Return No. 192, of 17th May 1892, from which the following result is obtained, viz., that the total amount of annual allowances (whether in the form of salary, pay, fees, emoluments, or pensions) of not less than Rx.1,000 for each person, of Europeans, whether resident or not resident in India, is about Rx.170,000,000 (taking payments in sterling at 1s. 1d. per rupee), and what is the total amount of similar annual allowances to Europeans, whether resident or not resident in India (including the personal expenditure on soldiers besides their pay) at less than Rx.1,000 for each person?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: The Return of 17th May 1892 comprises not only payments by the State for the civil administration of India, but similar payments for the Military and Public Works Departments, and also the payments made by the Railway Companies, whether State or Guaranteed. The further information for which my hon. Friend asks will probably be called for in the forthcoming inquiry.

BURIAL BOARD FEES.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Burial Boards of Bishop's Stortford, Weston-super-Mare, Walton-on-Thames, and Aylsham are acting under tables of fees and charges in which, contrary to the Statute, fees are charged in the unconsecrated parts of their cemeteries equal in amount to the fees paid to the clergy in the consecrated parts; and whether steps have been taken to put an end to these illegal exactions; and, if so, with what results?

MR. ASQUITH: My attention has been called to certain irregularities in the tables of fees under which the four Burial Boards named in my hon. Friend's question have been acting. I have written to the Boards explaining that the only burial fees of a compulsory character are the Board's fees approved by the Secretary of State, which are the same whether the burial is in consecrated or unconsecrated ground, and the ecclesiastical fees for interment in consecrated ground approved by the Bishop of the Diocese; and that all other payments, however customary, are entirely voluntary, and must be left to private arrangement. The Burial Boards for Walton-on-Thames and Weston-super-Mare have already submitted to me tables of fees revised in accordance with my suggestions, and I am expecting answers from Aylsham and Bishop's Stortford.

THE EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT.

MR. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case in the Court of Session in Scotland, at the instance of Mrs. Margaret Polland, or Brannan, residing in Larkhall, and others, against Hamilton M'Culloch and Company, coalmasters, Glasgow, wherein the jury awarded damages to the pursuers under the Employers' Liability Act as compensation for the loss of three men who were killed owing to a crab, winch, or crane used in raising and lowering the men in the shaft not having been provided with a brake or brakes, or with an indicator; whether the Presiding Judge (the Lord President) directed the Jury that the crab, winch, or crane used, having been worked by manual and not by mechanical power, did not fall under the 30th General Rule of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, which requires an adequate brake, or brakes, and a proper indicator for every machine worked by steam, water, or mechanical power, and used for lowering or raising persons, and, consequently, that the Jury were to ignore common law, but might consider the case under the Employers' Liability Act; and, whether (assuming the law to be as stated by the Lord President) he will, in the interest of safety and with the view of preventing avoidable accidents, bring in a Bill to extend the 30th General Rule of the Coal Mines Regulation Act to all mechanical appliances used for lowering or raising persons?

MR. ASQUITH: The facts are as stated by the hon. Member. The accident appears to be due partly to the crane being out of order, for which the owners have had to pay damages, and partly owing to its unskilful and negligent use. I am advised that even had a brake existed the accident would probably still have happened, for no statutory requirements can be of avail if machinery is kept out of order and misused. I am also advised that, though brakes are necessary to steam-winding gear to check the speed at the end of the journey, such brakes, if fitted to hand gear, would be likely to encourage the men to trust to them and leave go of the winch handles, which would be very dangerous. I have powers under Section 42 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1887 to require anything which threatens or tends to the bodily injury of any person to be remedied, and if it could be shown that hand cranes without brakes are dangerous I should be prepared to put these powers into operation.

PROSECUTION FOR SELLING ADULTERATED COCOA.

ADMIRAL FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a report in *The Times* of the 19th instant of a prosecution before Mr. de Rutzen, in the Westminster Police Court, of a grocer named David Jones for selling so-called "adulterated cocoa" at 1s. per pound, which was alleged to be composed of 50 per cent. starch and sugar and 50 per cent. of cocoa, the defendant being fined 10s. and 14s. 6d. costs; and, whether, in view of the fact that the said cocoa was sold at its true value, and was of precisely similar quality to that supplied by Her Majesty's Government to the seamen of Her Majesty's Fleet as "soluble cocoa," which is so manufactured at Deptford by the Admiralty, and consists of 25 per cent. sugar, 25 per cent. sago flour, with 50 per cent. of cocoa, he will be pleased to remit the penalty imposed upon the aforesaid David Jones?

MR. ASQUITH: I have inquired into this case, and I find that the offence for which the defendant was fined was for selling an article not of the nature and quality demanded by the purchaser. The purchaser asked for cocoa, and not for "soluble cocoa," and in the opinion of the Magistrate, from which I see no reason to differ, he was entitled to have cocoa. I find on inquiry from the Admiralty, that they supply to the men in the Navy cocoa in two forms: one is ordinary cocoa, which forms the usual ration and is made of pure cocoa and sugar only; the other is "soluble cocoa," which is only issued as a special ration (to men on duty at night, or under circumstances of unusual exposure), and this contains a percentage both of sugar and arrowroot.

ADMIRAL FIELD: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire whether an offence has really been committed in this case, the article sold being identical in substance with an article manufactured by the Government, and if an offence has been committed, will he ask the Law Officers of the Crown whether the First Lord of the Admiralty ought not to be indicted for supplying goods of this class to the Navy?

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. J. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a number of small farmers waited on the Bantry Board of Guardians, and stated that, in consequence of the failure of the potato crop, they were in a state of destitution; and that the Bantry Board of Guardians unanimously passed a resolution requesting the Government to open reproductive works in the Bantry Union; and, what steps, if any, he purposes taking to carry out the request of the Guardians?

MR. J. MORLEY: The facts are as stated in the question. The Local Government Board's Inspector has been directed to again visit this Union and make a further report on the condition and prospects of the poorer classes.

MR. M. AUSTIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, in view of the extreme distress existing among the agricultural labourers in the districts of Newcastle West and Rathkeale, he will consider favourably the resolutions passed by the Guardians with the object of providing employment, viz., the repairing of the old road from the town of Abbeyfeale to John O'Donnell's house in Cahir Hayes, in the Union of Newcastle West, this being in the centre of a very distressed district, and the draining of the River Deel, Rathkeale, so as to relieve from flooding the 3,000 acres of land which are under water during the winter months?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board's Inspector consulted with the Guardians of the Newcastle West Union on the 21st instant, as to the advisability of applying for authority to relax the restrictions on outdoor relief. The Guardians, however, considered this course undesirable and thought it better to leave to the relieving officer the duty of providing for the wants of the destitute poor. I understand that if the weather, which has shown an improvement, continues mild for a few days longer employment will be plentiful in this district. The Local Government Board, upon the information at present before them, do not consider it will be necessary to recommend the opening of relief works in the districts of Newcastle West or Rathkeale.

LANDS VALUATION (SCOTLAND) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. J. CALDWELL: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, on behalf of the Government, he intends to put down any Amendments to the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill, down for Committee this evening; and, if so, when these Amendments may be expected to appear on the Paper?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (MR. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan and Kinross): I think it will be desirable that some Amendments should be made on this Bill, and I am in communication with my hon. Friend the Member for the St. Rollox Division, who is in charge of the Bill, and my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dumfriesshire, who has put certain Amendments on the Paper, with a view to arranging as to the Amendments which should be proposed for the consideration of the Committee.

REGISTERS OF VOTERS IN IRELAND.

MR. D. SHEEHY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in the Return (No. 300) showing the amounts received by the county and borough treasurers in Ireland from the clerks of the peace in respect of the sale of copies of the registers of voters and supplemental lists, no receipts appear to have been credited for the years noted in the Return for the counties of Westmeath, Cork, and Galway, and the boroughs of Cork and Galway; whether it is the practice of the clerks of the peace in these constituencies to charge for copies as required by statute; and could he explain why the amounts have not been placed to the credit of the county and borough treasurers respectively; whether he can state if in any of these cases any moneys have been credited since the passing of the Act requiring the same to be done in 1850; and how it has happened that the responsible Auditors of the Local Government Board, who audit the Grand Jury accounts twice a-year, have not called attention to the matter; whether he is also aware that in the Return no sum appears anywhere audited under the heading of "Fines" for bogus claims and objections, although it is notorious that these are made in thousands annually; and, who is to blame for the neglect?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I regret to be obliged to ask my hon. Friend to again defer this question. Some inquiries are still pending, and if he will repeat the question on Monday, I hope then to be in a position to reply.

"SOLUBLE COCOA."

Admiral FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the fact that Her Majesty's Government supply the seamen of Her Majesty's Fleet with "soluble cocoa," manufactured by the Admiralty at Deptford, of a standard quality composed of 25 per cent. sugar, 25 per cent. sago flour, and only 50 per cent. cocoa, he would issue a Circular to County Councils, acquainting them with the fact, and that the Local Government Board deem it inexpedient that legal proceedings under the Adulteration of Food Act should be instituted against dealers in prepared cocoas where the analysis shows that the said cocoa mixtures are up to the aforesaid Government standard?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: From a communication which I have received from the Admiralty, it would appear that the constituent parts of the soluble chocolate manufactured by the Admiralty are not those stated in the question. The matter is not one in which I should deem it right to issue a Circular as suggested.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS IN NORTHUMBERLAND.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that, in order to meet the pressure in Voluntary schools in the north of England, after the issue of Circular 321 by him, the School Management Committee of the Newcastle Diocesan Society formed an organisation for supervising all communications between the Department and the Voluntary schools of the county of Northumberland, and of assisting these schools to resist undue pressure or to meet the demands which might fairly be made upon them; whether he has seen the Report issued for the year 1894 by the Education Committee of the Society, in which it is stated, amongst other things, that in 21 cases in the county of Northumberland the building requirements of the Department were, upon local explanation, either modified or withdrawn at a saving of £4,240; and if he will explain how it happened that these demands, which were subsequently reduced, were originally made by the Department?

Mr. ACLAND: I have seen the Report issued for 1894 by the Education Committee of the Newcastle Diocesan Society, which appeared in *The Times* of the 7th of last month. In the article in which the report is quoted, and which is written by a member of the committee, I observe that it is explicitly stated that the demands of the Department were not arbitrary or capricious, and that in no one instance had it met representations by other than fairness. The fact that requirements and suggestions made by the Department had by the aid of this committee (which not only advised managers in every detail, but supplied them free of cost with the most economical plans for carrying out alterations) been modified, at a large saving to the particular schools, is cited in the article, as showing the need of some organisation on the part of school managers in order to help the Department to understand the local situation in each case. The figures mentioned are not capable of being verified officially, but I have no wish to throw doubt on them, especially as they come from what I may fairly call such a friendly source.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

MR. H. S. FOSTER: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, will he explain how it was that whereas, in accordance with the Report of Her Majesty's Inspector upon St. Edmund's Voluntary School, Southwold, Suffolk, for the year 1893, which suggested that the school buildings were not worth repairing, the Department urged upon the Managers to provide new premises altogether, at a cost of at least £1,500, the Department subsequently approved of plans for the alteration of the present premises at a cost of only £450; and, if he can explain why this course was not recommended by the Department in the first instance?

MR. ACLAND: I do not think that there has been any inconsistency in the action of the Department in this case. To make the school efficient large alterations were necessary, and the Department suggested to the Managers that they should consider whether it would not be better to build a new school, the existing building being old, cramped, and ill designed. The Managers, however, preferred to carry out the required alterations, and their plans for doing so were approved last September. As to the figures mentioned, the Department has no information, but I do not wish to throw any doubt upon them.

THE INDIAN POLICE BILL.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he has sanctioned those provisions of the Indian Police Bill now before the Viceroy's Council, whereby the landlords of any district in which religious or other riots have occurred are liable, at the discretion of the resident magistrate, for the cost of extra police and for the damages caused by the riots, even in cases where the landlords are absentees, or in which the district judge has held that the landlords have been in no way to blame for the riots; whether his attention has been directed to the speech on this subject of the Maharaja of Darbhanga, the first elective member of council, in which he declared that in Native opinion this was a slur on judicial authority; whether the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and the Commissioner of the Patna Division of Behar have both opposed the section on the ground that it may be worked so as to appear to give the victory to the Hindus or to the Muhammadans in cases of religious riots; whether the modification of the section consented to by Sir Antony Patrick MacDonnell has satisfied these dissentients; and, whether the Correspondence on the subject can be laid upon the Table of the House?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: The provisions of the Indian Police Bill, as originally introduced, were communicated to me, according to the established practice, by the Government of India, but I have given no opinion upon them. I have seen the report of the discussions to which the hon. Member refers, but I am not as yet aware of the modifications (if any) which have been adopted. As soon as an authentic copy of the measure is sent home, as required by law, I shall give it my careful consideration.

CORK AND MUSKERRY LIGHT RAILWAY.

DR. TANNER (Mid Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether his attention has been directed to the proposed extension of the Cork and Muskerry Light Railway to Nad from Donoughmore, and also to Ballinagree from Peak, both in the county of Cork; and (2) whether, if satisfactory security be received from the landed proprietors as well as the rated occupiers within the area proposed to be served, the Treasury will materially help the proposed reproductive works in a district where distress prevails.

MR. J. MORLEY: With regard to the first part of this question, I am informed that any proceedings having in view the construction of the railway extensions referred to, and involving a security on the rates, would require to be taken in the manner prescribed by the Tramways Acts, and the work of construction could not be commenced in the present season even if those proceedings were successful. It is to be observed that there are no moneys available for a

Treasury contribution under the Act of 1883.

SMALL-POX ON A REFORMATORY SHIP.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether his attention has been called to a bad outbreak of small-pox on the reformatory ship *Clarence?* Whether he is aware that early in November there were cases of fever among the boys; that a boy named John Carroll was certified by the surgeon of the ship to be suffering from chicken-pox, and on convalescence was allowed to go to sea in a sailing ship, which, on arrival at Rio de Janeiro, was placed in quarantine for having had small-pox on board; that many other boys were down with fever at the time and subsequently; and that the captain, the schoolmaster, and others urged strongly that something serious was the matter, but that the surgeon persisted in declaring the fever to be at worst chicken-pox; will he explain why it was that although on the 24th November the captain insisted that in the case of two boys, Thomas Sexton and Patrick Doyle, further medical advice should be obtained, it was not till the 26th that the ship's surgeon brought off the medical officer of the port of Liverpool, who, without hesitation, at once declared the cases to be small-pox, and 18 boys were forthwith transferred to the Port Sanitary Hospital; And, whether he has instituted or will institute an official inquiry into these reported facts of dangerous neglect of an infectious disease?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: My attention has been called to this case. The facts are substantially as stated in the question, though one or two points have not yet been confirmed from independent sources. I have directed the Inspector and Assistant Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools to make an official inquiry into the matter. They went to Liverpool on Monday, and will report to me as soon as possible.

IRISH ROAD CONTRACTORS.

MR. R. M. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, having regard to the decision of Her Majesty's Judges in the High Court of Justice in Ireland, *in re* Doherty's presentment, the Irish Government intend to propose legislation with reference to the payment of road contractors in Ireland in respect of maintenance contracts.

MR. J. MORLEY: The case referred to in the question was decided against the contractor upon the construction of his contract with the Grand Jury, not upon any defect in the Grand Jury Laws. The Court of Appeal in Ireland yesterday decided on an appeal in the case that it is competent to the county surveyor to give a certificate for part of the money to which a contractor would be entitled had the contract been completed. No Legislation, I am advised, seems to be necessary.

SEPARATION OF INDOOR PAUPERS.

MR. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to the inquest on the death of Mrs. Mary Linge, at the Poplar Workhouse on the 23rd inst., when the jury returned a verdict that the deceased died from heart failure, and that the separation of the old couple accelerated her death; and whether the rules of the workhouse necessitated the separation of Mr. and Mrs. Linge, who were stated to have lived in the parish all their lives, the man earning his living and keeping the home going until the present year, when for the first time, he being in his 70th and his wife in her 68th year, they sought outdoor relief, until eventually they had no resource but the workhouse, upon entering which they were separated?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: My attention has been called to the case referred to, and I have been in communication with the Guardians with respect to it. The Guardians state that the deceased had been in receipt of outdoor relief for about eight months prior to her admission to the workhouse, and it was on the advice of the medical officer of the district, based upon the insanitary condition of her home and her increasing infirmity, that it was considered to be essential that she should enter the infirm ward of the workhouse. It is stated that when she was admitted to the workhouse on the 11th February she was feeble but did not complain of illness. The nurse states that she required considerable attention, and would not have been a suitable case for the married couples quarter, and that she made no complaint to her during the time she was in the workhouse of being separated from her husband. At the same time, it appears that there is only accommodation at the workhouse for eight married couples living together, and the Guardians are endeavouring to provide increased accommodation of this kind. I am also informed that the Guardians resolved at their last meeting that the workhouse should not be offered to aged couples, but that adequate outdoor relief should be given in all such cases, until additional accommodation for married couples had been provided.

THE OPIUM COMMISSION.

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Her Majesty's Government have been able to reconsider the question of charging a share of the Opium Commission expenses to the Indian Revenues?

*__THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER__ (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I have considered this subject in all its bearings, and I have come to the conclusion, in conjunction with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for India, that, viewing all the circumstances of the case, the cost of the Commission should be borne by the English Exchequer and not by the Indian Government. The cost of the Commission will be among the Supplementary Estimates, which I hope will be laid on the Table to-night and circulated to-morrow.

COMMISSIONERS OF WOODS AND FORESTS.

SIR LEONARD LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in filling up the vacant office of Commissioner of Woods and Forests, the Government will attach special weight to the person they select having practical experience and knowledge of forest management?

*__SIR C. W. DILKE__ asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would consider the reports made on the occasion of the last vacancy as to appointing someone acquainted with mines and minerals.

MR. H. L. W. LAWSON (Gloucester, Cirencester) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would consider the expediency of reducing the numbers of this Commission by not filling up the vacancy, having regard to the question of expense.

*__SIR W. HARCOURT__ said, he did not think that the latter suggestion was possible, considering that the Commission had to range over all parts of the United Kingdom, and that the work could not be undertaken by one person. He would take care to bring the question before the attention of the Prime Minister.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO BILL.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked, whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer could indicate the probable date of the Introduction of the Liquor Traffic Local Veto Bill?

SIR W. HARCOURT: No; I cannot do so now, but the date will depend a good deal upon the reception given to the Motion which I have to submit to the House.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS BILL.

SIR C. DILKE asked, what course the Government intended to take with this Bill; when it was proposed to proceed with it?

SIR W. HARCOURT said that he must reserve his reply until he proposed the Motion which stood in his name upon the Paper.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

*__THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER__ (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby) rose to move: "That, until Easter, Government Business have priority on Tuesdays, that on Friday the House do meet at Two of the clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to Tuesday and the Morning Sitting on Friday." He said: We have now arrived at the time at which it has been usual for the Government to ask the House for additional time for the transaction of Public Business. An application of this kind was made by the late Government in 1892, on March 3; and in 1893 it was made a little earlier—that is, on February 27—by my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian. Therefore I am making the application at a time when it is usual to make this demand. Let us see exactly what the situation is, and what the time at the disposal of the House and the Government. There are fixed dates for certain business, dates which may be taken as unalterable, on my authority, and on that of those who have preceded me in the office which I hold. First of all, the latest date when the Royal Assent can be given to the Ways and Means Bill, which authorises the financial arrangements of the year, is March 28. It is taken before the actual close of the financial year, because there are demands in respect of the Irish Constabulary and of the Education Department, which the Treasury must be prepared to meet on April 1. March 28 is, therefore, the last day on which the Royal Assent can be given. Her Majesty will be abroad at that time, and, in order that the Royal Assent may be given on the day which I have named, the Bill must be read in the House of Lords a third time on March 26, and that again is a fixed date. We are now in the habit of doing things very rapidly, and it would be possible to condense into one day the Third Reading in this House and all the stages of the Bill in the House of Lords. This would permit of the Introduction of the Bill in this House on the 21st, and it would have to be read a second time on the 22nd. The Report of Supply, which gives rise generally to considerable discussion, and the Report of Ways and Means could be taken on Thursday, the 21st. So, if you use every possible means of compression, the very latest day for closing Committee of Supply and introducing the Bill will be the 21st, but I cannot say that it is safe, in my opinion, to fix a later day than the 18th. The House will remember the great pressure under which the Government found themselves last year in consequence of the change of Administration, and yet even in those circumstances the day on which the Ways and Means Bill was introduced was March 19. Whether you take the 18th or the 21st, those are the dates by which you must have completed your Supply in Committee and your Reports of Supply and Ways and Means. Just consider what the situation of the Government will be if we are confined to the regular rule. The time available for the financial business of the Government will be three days or four days, according as you fix the 21st or the 18th for the Introduction of the Bill.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman explain how there will be only three days?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am counting Government days only. I am assuming that we only have Mondays and Thursdays. What are the obligations that have to be fulfilled in those three or four days? I will state what the circumstances are as explained by an authority whom hon. Gentlemen opposite will respect—I mean the Leader of the Opposition, whose absence we all regret. As I have said, the application for further time was made to the House by that right hon. Gentleman in 1892 on March 3. It was made under circumstances which made it of much earlier application in regard to time than we are in to-day. Parliament met on the 9th of February in that Session — that is, four days later than we did this year. Then they had this advantage—that they were allowed to get the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne in a week; we have had to wait for a fortnight. That is to say, the Opposition has demanded this year twice as much time from the Government. I am not aware what all the Motions were, but I do not wish to introduce controversial matter. As a fact, there was only one week occupied that Session in the Debate on the Address; this Session there has been a fortnight occupied. Parliament met in 1892 on February 9th, and the Debate on the Address closed on the 15th; this year we met on the 5th, and the Debate on the Address closed upon the 18th. That, of course, has left less time at the disposal of the Government. We have had, besides, Motions of Adjournment, which have taken up a considerable portion of time. Therefore, we are worse off, in respect of time, than the Government was on March 1, 1892. The Motion made in 1892 was a far more comprehensive Motion than the present. That Motion was not confined to Easter, but extended to the whole Session. There was no limitation to the

Motion. It is sometimes said—in fact, it is always said—that a particular Motion brought forward has no precedent. Why, of course, it has not. The Motion itself is the precedent. It always has references to the necessities and conveniencies and particular circumstances of the time. There was absolutely no precedent for the Motion made on March 3rd, 1892. Not one of these Motions made in any year was exactly the same as the Motion made in any other year, and therefore in that sense, no doubt, each Motion is without precedent. The Motion in 1892 was in these terms—

"That the House do meet on Tuesday and Friday at Two o'clock; that the principal business at such morning sittings shall be Financial Business and proceedings on the Introduction and First Reading of Bills; and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to such sittings."

In one respect, as I have said, it is more comprehensive, because it covers the whole Session; in other respects it is more limited, because it is limited to particular objects. Now, I will confine myself for a moment to the Financial question to see how we stand. We have the whole of the Supplementary and other Estimates to get through before the end of the financial year, just as the Government of that day had. But there is another material circumstance, for I may inform the House that there is a very large Supplementary Estimate for the Navy, which, probably, will require discussion in this House. Therefore, the Supplementary Estimates that have to be dealt with are larger and heavier than those of 1892. The right hon. Gentleman on that occasion said that, in addition to the Supplementary Estates—

"there are the first Navy Vote and the first Army Vote to be got through; and we also require to take a Vote on Account."

I believe that, though it is not absolutely necessary that all of these Votes should be taken before the Appropriation Bill is introduced, it is absolutely necessary they should all be taken before the end of the financial year, but it would be a matter to be regretted if you could not, before the Introduction of the Consolidated Fund Bill, take the Preliminary Votes for the Army and the Navy. Now, see what that means. This means not only a Vote in the Committee, but it means the discussion, with the Speaker in the Chair, before you go into Committee. Therefore, you have to dispose of the Supplementary Estimates and the Preliminary Army and Navy Votes, and you have to get the Speaker out of the Chair and these two Votes taken, if you want to do the Financial Business of the country by March 21. Is the House of Commons going to say that four days are enough for that? They could not say it in 1892, and they did not say it on February 27th, 1893. I undertake to say the House as a business assembly would not say the financial work of the House could be transacted within the time that is available. So much for Finance. Then the right hon. Gentleman went on to deal with the other branches of his Motion, and I ask the attention of the House to this as coming from the Leader of the Opposition—

"A fashion for discussing measures before they are seen appears to be growing in certain quarters of the House, and I am far on this occasion from desiring te raise any question of debate; but the fact, at all events, will be admitted, and that it is highly inconvenient, both from the point of view of hon. Members who wish to acquaint themselves with the real provisions of a Government measure, and also from the point of view of the outside public, that Bills should be suspended, that they should not be placed before the country, and that we should be deprived of the advantage of hearing the criticisms which would be passed upon them by the various parts of the country affected by them."

Therefore, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman claimed two things. He claimed for the whole of the Session that the discussions, not on merely the Supplementary Estimates, but on the whole of the Estimates for the next year, should be in the time which was to be given to the Government by this Resolution, as also should the discussions of the First Reading of Bills on account of what he described—and I heartily agree with him—as the extremely unbusinesslike and mischievous practice of protracting Debates on the First Reading of Bills before they were laid before the House. I think that is one of the most unbusinesslike things it is possible to do and a great waste of public time. That, Sir, was an unprecedented proposal on the part of the Government. How was it met by the Leader of the Opposition of that day, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian? Did he come down here and say it was monstrous to make such a Motion, that it was an unprecedented proposal, that such a thing had never been heard of, and that the Opposition would not consent to it? On the contrary, he said it was a wide proposal to be made on the 3rd of March, Parliament having only met on the 9th of February, and that it was a proposal to give away the whole of Tuesdays and Fridays—that was, the Morning Sittings—for the entire Session of Parliament. He said it was a wide proposal, and unquestionably it was, but he did not offer it uncompromising opposition. He made a suggestion and an Amendment that the proposal should be confined to the period before Easter, and that was carried and accepted by the House. That is exactly the proposal we have made. We have not made a proposal to cover the whole of the Session, but we have made a proposal for the time up to Easter, which is identical with the proposal which, as I have said, was on the occasion to which I refer accepted by the House on the suggestion of the right hon. Member for Midlothian. I think the Government have pretty fairly followed the precedent of the previous Government, and I hope the Opposition will follow the precedent of the Opposition of that day in their manner of dealing with the matter. So much for that part of the proposal. I have said with reference to the date, March 21, that that is necessary for dealing with the subjects which must be included in the Ways and Means Bill. The Supplementary Estimates will be in it, and the Preliminary Votes for the Army and Navy ought to be included. But suppose you postpone beyond that date any one of these Votes, you will then only have two days under the present circumstances at the disposal of the Government between that date and the close of the financial year. That is the precedent of 1892 brought forward by the Government of that day, and most properly brought forward, in my opinion; and I think properly amended by my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian, so far as his amendment confined it to Easter. What was done in 1893? In 1893, the next year, application was made on February 27—a day earlier than we are to-day making it—upon that subject, and the following Resolution was proposed by the Prime Minister:—

> "That until Easter the House do meet on Tuesday and Friday at Two o'clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to the Morning Sittings on those days."

And then mark this proyiso:—

> "Provided always that if the Government of Ireland Bill be appointed for any of such days the House do meet at Three o'clock, and the proceedings on that Bill do have precedence of the Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion."

That was the Motion which was submitted to the House and accepted by the House; therefore, the precedent of 1893 is a much stronger precedent than anything we have asked for here. Not only were you to give up on Tuesday and Friday Morning Sittings, but the whole day whenever the principal Government Bill was put down. I do not know whether it will be said in reference to our Bills that they are certain not to pass, but certainly the Motion of 1893 applied to a Bill which, in the opinion of of hon. Gentlemen opposite, would not, and, as it turned out, did not, pass. That was the Home Rule Bill, and yet in 1893 the House, by a great majority, ordered that the Government should have Tuesdays and Fridays and the whole of the sittings for the Home Rule Bill whenever it was brought on. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, when he made his proposal on the 3rd March, concluded his speech by saying—

> "I hope the House will give us the very modest powers we ask for without any prolonged debate."

Well, if those were very modest powers, ours are much more modest powers than those asked for either in 1892 or 1893, both of which were granted by the House. I would ask the House to consider what is the position of the Government with reference to public business, both with regard to Finance and with regard to Legislation. Anybody who knows anything about government, knows that it is absolutely impossible that the business, which the Government are expected to do in this House, can be done in the time allotted to them by the Standing Orders. What is that time? Two days a week, or eight days a month. They have to pass these Estimates—the Supplementary Estimates—before Easter, and the Army and Navy Votes, and the Vote on Account for Civil Services. They have pressed upon them, as we had pressed upon us to-day and always on Government nights, 80 or 90 questions, which take up a hour and a half of the time. Then we have a new and portentous evil in the private Bills, which are generally put down upon Government nights, and all these occupy a great part of the time at the disposal of the Government. Then we have Motions of Adjournment, which take up whole days which belong to Government time; and out of the residue of the time the Government is expected to transact the business which devolves upon them. Now, I am speaking not in the interest of one Government or another, not in the interest of Gentlemen who to-day sit on this Bench, but of the Government which expects to sit on this Bench to-morrow. "Let no man consider himself happy until his death" is a good maxim, and I would advise gentlemen opposite not to lay down doctrines from which they will suffer very much themselves. They will find it just as difficult as we find it, under the existing modern condition of things, to transact the business which they will be called upon to transact; and I advise them to consider this question from that point of view. Some people say that this ought to be done by an alteration in the Standing Orders. I do not think so. I think it much better it should be done according to the necessities of the time. In some years it may be that more time is wanted than in others, and I think it would not be of advantage to dispose of this matter with a cast-iron rule which in one year might give too much time and in another year too little. It is for the House to judge according to the circumstances of the time how much relaxation or how much larger expansion of time shall be given in one year than in another. That has been the practice for many years past. I believe it is a sound practice; I believe it is a convenient practice; and I should be very sorry to see that practice altered. Now, Sir, with reference to the question of Finance, I really think there is not a word to be said. No one can pretend that by the 21st of March if you give us every second of Government time that the financial business can be satisfactorily transacted. You cannot do it in the time, and nobody possibly could. As regards the question of the Introduction of Bills, is it not a reasonable thing that the Government who are responsible for the main Legislation of the Session should lay before the House and the country the measures upon which they ask Parliament to occupy its time? It is idle to say that the Opposition do not approve of the Bills the Government introduces. That is always the case with every Opposition, and must be so with reference to what may be called the great political measures. The majority who support the Government will always have views which are not shared by the Gentlemen who sit opposite, and therefore you must always have the Government introducing measures of which the Opposition do not approve. Those measures ought to be laid before the House and the country, unless you are going to accept the doctrine, which would be most injurious to the character of Parliament, that the proper function of an Opposition is really to prevent the Government from legislating at all. That is a game two can play at, and if once such a doctrine is accepted great injury will be done to the character and the efficiency of the House of Commons. What is to be the situation, then? When we come back after the Easter Holidays very nearly half of the Session will have gone; and if the Government were to be confined to the days which I have mentioned, and to the four days in April which they would have, assuming the House adjourned on the Thursday before Good Friday, that would be the whole time they would have in which to do the additional Estimates and to introduce all the Bills on which they wish the opinion of Parliament. Would it represent the House before the country as a business assemply if, when three months of the time of Parliament had expired, it could be said:—

> "You have practically made it impossible for the Government to lay before the House and the country the Legislation upon which they desire the opinion of Parliament to be taken?"

In my opinion you would paralyse the action of the House of Commons by any such proceeding. Much as you disapprove of these Bills, it is, at all events, the duty of the Government to lay them before the House and take the judgment of the House upon them. We are making a proposal which is absolutely in conformity with the principles—I do not say with all the details—of Motions that have been made and accepted by the House before. Some of these Motions were for Morning Sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays, therefore the whole difference that exists between our Motion and the other Motions is that we take the whole of Tuesdays instead of only the morning. I have a strong personal opinion on the subject of Morning Sittings. I do not believe that when you take a Morning Sitting the remanet you leave to private Members is of great value. On the other hand, a Sitting in the Morning is very inconvenient to a great number of Members—to business and professional men. While I like a nice, quiet Morning Sitting myself for getting through Government business, I think that unless you get some great advantage by taking a Morning Sitting on Tuesday it is much better that the whole day should be taken. The Government is held responsible for the principal Legislation of the Session, and it is only reasonable they should have such time as will enable them to do their business. I have endeavoured to state the case as fairly and as frankly as I can. It is for the House to decide. In my opinion, it is as much to the interest of one Party as another, of one Government as another, that these facilities should be afforded; and I hope the House will, as it has done on previous occasions, give to the Government under this Resolution power to carry out the functions which are by the Constitution devolved upon it. I beg to move the Motion which stands in my name.

*Sir M. E. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) did not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer ever appeared in the House to such advantage as when he was moving a Resolution of this kind. His manner was so suave, his reluctance to blame his adversaries was so unusual, his disclaimer of all Party motive was so delightful that he prejudiced them all in favour of the Motion he proposed. A Resolution of this kind proposed by the Government, as necessary for the transaction of the business of the House, must command some sympathy from those who had been responsible for that business. It might sometimes, perhaps, be thought by hon. Members who had not had official experience that right hon. Gentlemen were too apt to look favourably on such Motions; but in one thing they would agree—that the Government was always bound to show a necessity for its demand in each particular case. The right hon. Gentleman divided his speech into two parts. He dwelt at very considerable length upon precedents, and at one time he thought the right hon. Gentleman was going to base his case entirely upon those precedents. The right hon. Gentleman relied mainly, if not entirely, on the precedents of 1892 and 1893. He welcomed the allusion to the precedent of 1892, for the reason that they who knew something of what was passing in political circles at that time remembered that the facility with which the time of the House was granted to the Government on that occasion was largely due to the knowledge on the part of the Opposition that a Dissolution was impending. [The Chancellor of the Exchequer: "Not in March."] Yes, in March. He hoped he might accept the precedent to its full extent. He hoped they might take the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman alluded to the precedent of 1892 as an omen of the intention of Her Majesty's Government to do that which the Opposition desired above everything else, and to give them an appeal to the country, But, however that might be, the precedents of 1892 and 1893 were clear. In the first place, the Minister proposing the Resolution proposed it for the transaction of some particular business, which he named to the House. [The Chancellor of the Exchequer: "Not in 1893."] In both years. In 1892 the present Leader of the Opposition specified the supplementary Estimates and the introduction of four measures —the Local Taxation Relief (Scotland) Bill, the Fee Grant (Scotland) Bill, the Assisted Education (Ireland) Bill, and a Bill relating to Private Bill Legislation in Scotland. The first three of these measures were of small importance, and were non-controversial; and it was necessary, for financial reasons, to pass two of them before a certain date.

SIR W. HARCOURT: There was no limitation in the Resolution.

SIR M. E. HICKS-BEACH said, there was a limitation in the speech of the Minister, and the right hon. Gentleman would not deny that a limitation in the speech of a Minister was as binding as the terms of a Resolution. In 1893, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian took precisely the same course. He told the House he wanted additional facilities for the transaction of financial business and the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, that was not so. The morning sittings were taken without any reservation. The Government of Ireland Bill was taken at whole day sittings. With regard to morning sittings on Tuesdays, no limit was made.

*SIR M. E. HICKS-BEACH said, he had not stated there was any limitation in the Resolution. What he said was, that the purport of the speech of the Minister was, that financial business and the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill was the business he intended to take. As a matter of fact, the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill was not proceeded with until after Easter, so that practically the effect of the Resolution of 1893 was to forward financial business only. There was another substantial difference between what was done on those two occasions compared with what the right hon. Gentleman proposed to do now. In 1892 and 1893 morning sittings only were asked for. The right hon. Gentleman made light of that by saying that the evening sitting was of no use at all to private members. Then why did he not ask for Fridays as well as Tuesdays? What was the use of leaving Friday evenings, which, according to him, were of no service whatever to private Members? But what they were entitled to, according to all precedents, when the time of the House was taken before Easter for the transaction of special business, was, a statement from the Government of what that special business was to be. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that, in the first place, it was to be finance. They were to have the supplementary Estimates, and also certain votes of the ordinary Estimates. He believed that neither the supplementary nor the ordinary Estimates had yet been circulated. He hoped they would be circulated immediately and the Government would lose no time in asking the House to devote itself to the necessary work of Supply. He did not wish to accuse the right hon. Gentleman of breach of faith, but he wished to impress on the House what passed in relation to this matter last year. On April 9, 1894, the right hon. Gentleman came down to the House and said that he had to make a very large claim upon their time, and moved precisely the same resolution which he had moved on the present occasion. To that resolution an amendment was moved by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage), to the effect that Supply should be put down as the first Order for one day in every week until it was concluded. There were probably, very practical objections to that proposal, but how did the right hon. Gentleman meet it? He met it by undertaking to give full and adequate time to Supply.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will pardon me, but I desire to make the position clear. The right hon. Gentleman must remember that the subsequent part of the Session, or the whole of the time referred to, was practically given up to financial business, in the way of the Committee on the Budget.

*SIR M. E. HICKS-BEACH said, his recollection did not quite tally with the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman. After the debates on the Budget were concluded the right hon. Gentleman insisted upon the House dealing with the Evicted Tenants Bill, the Equalisation of Rates (London) Bills, and with a private Member's Bill—the Eight Hours Bill—on which two days of their time were absolutely wasted, and it was not until the middle of August that, with the exception of two Irish votes, the slightest attempt was made by the Government to proceed with the Civil Service Estimates, nearly the whole of which were voted after that date without any real discussion. He did not wish, any more than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to make a party matter of this question; but he appealed to hon. Members in every part of the House whether that was a convenient, a proper, or a right way for the House to discharge one of its most important and necessary functions. He hoped, therefore, they were justified in understanding the right hon. Gentleman to make now a definite promise that not only would he pass the supplementary Estimates before the day on which the law required them to be passed—but that he would also utilise the time before Easter in making real progress with the ordinary votes in Supply. But what else were the Government going to do? Was the right hon. Gentleman going to utilise the rest of the time for which he asked in introducing all the measures named in the Queen's Speech; or was he going to utilise any portion of it in moving the second reading of any of these Bills? They should in all fairness have a definite statement from the Government on that matter; but he was afraid they would not get it. A similar request was made to the right hon. Gentleman last year, and he absolutely declined to tell the House in any degree what he was going to do. What had been the practice of the Government in this matter ever since they had come into Office? In their first year they gave in the Queen's Speech a list of 12 Bills of great importance. Then on March 30th the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian told the House that it was absolutely necessary that the whole of the time of the House for the rest of the Session should be devoted to Government Business. The House assented to that course, after a vain protest from the Opposition. The right hon. Gentleman did his best to dragoon the House into Legislation, but of those 12 Bills only four ever passed the House, though the House sat for 11 months after that proposal was carried. He should have thought that the ill success of that precedent would have discouraged any subsequent leader of the House from attempting to repeat it. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in just the same way, appealed to the House on April 9 last year, on behalf of what he described as a precious cargo. And what happened to that precious cargo? The right hon. Gentleman was told that he would have to jettison most of it, and at the end of the Session again only four of the 12 Bills promised in the Queen's Speech had passed the House of Commons.

Sir W. HARCOURT: And the Budget.

*SIR M. E. HICKS-BEACH said, he included the Budget in his list. A few weeks ago the Prime Minister, who always spoke in a way the Opposition thoroughly appreciated, made a speech at Cardiff, in which he said the Government were not going to have this year a barren Session of First Readings, and that, having learned wisdom from experience, the programme of 1895 was to be confined to measures that might be reasonably expected to become law. But was that promise kept? Let any hon. Member, no matter what his political opinions might be, look at the history of the Legislation of the past 30 years, look at the amount of work it has been given to any Parliament to do in a single Session, and then ask himself how many Bills out of the 12 Bills promised in the Queen's Speech were likely to pass this House in 1895. The right hon. Gentleman told the House that evening that he based his demand, not solely on the ground of precedent, not solely for the purpose of forwarding any particular business, but that he based it upon the ground that it was absolutely impossible that Government Business could be done in the time allowed to it by the Standing Orders of the House. That was a general ground. It practically amounted to saying that the Standing Orders were inapplicable to the present circumstances of Parliament and ought to be changed. The right hon. Gentleman added, that there was a fresh difficulty in the path of every Government at the present day, because there had arisen a new practice of lengthened discussions on private Bills. But if that were so, to whom was it due? Why, to the right hon. Gentleman's own supporters; for the Bills on which the longest discussions had taken place, were the Bills promoted, with but little hope of success, by the London County Council. The right hon. Gentleman while asking that greater facilities should be given to the Government on general grounds for the conduct of their business in the House—objected to deal with the question by an alteration in the Standing

Orders, and argued that their rules had better be relaxed year by year according to the necessities of the time. But if any one would examine the series of precedents in this matter he would find that those precedents were growing; he would find that the Government of the day—be it a Liberal Government or a Conservative Government—never went back upon a precedent when once it was made, so that year after year more of the time of the House and more control over the House were obtained by the Government. Now what was the precedent they were asked to establish on this occasion? Within 10 days of the termination of the Debate on the Address, private Members were to be deprived of any opportunity of bringing forward Motions, except after Nine o'clock on Friday evenings, and of any chance of having discussions on Bills which they had introduced unless they had been fortunate enough to secure the first or second place on the 13 or 14 Wednesdays before Whitsuntide. That might be a necessary change in their procedure; circumstances might have arisen which rendered it right and proper to make it. But he was absolutely certain that this Resolution, or something more stringent, would again be proposed after Easter, and would practically apply to the whole of the Session; and if it were once adopted not for exceptional reasons, but on general grounds, it would be applied in all future Sessions by all successive Governments. They would have made in that way, by what might seem a succession of small steps, a great and important change in the conduct of the business of the House. It might be right and necessary to make that change, but it should only be made after full consideration of all the circumstances of the case, and of the whole of the rules under which the business of the House is at present conducted. What had happened already? When hon. Members were deprived of the opportunities allotted to them by the ordinary rules of the House for bringing forward matters in which they took an interest, they persistently bubbled up on every other occasion. Adjournments were moved, and Debates were started on questions of principle in Committee of Supply, instead of Supply being confined, as used to be the case, solely to questions of finance. Questions were thus raised in the House in a way which was not only unsatisfactory in itself, but far more inconvenient to the Ministry of the day than if they had been discussed in the old fashion. He admitted that the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was only the last step in a gradual series of precedents; but such a change ought to be fully and fairly considered in a proper way before it was accepted by the House. What were the Government going to do with a considerable part of this time? They were going to devote it to the introduction of a number of Bills, hardly any of which had a chance of any subsequent consideration in the House during the Session. Would there be any greater gain to the public, or the House, by the Government obtaining the time of the House for that purpose, than by their time being devoted, for instance, to such Motions as were brought forward by hon. Members on the last two Tuesdays? Those Motions were of greater interest to a very large number of people than many of the Bills in the Government programme. Those motions might not have quite the results which were desired by the authors, but they certainly referred to subjects which deserved the attention of the House. He should be ready to give the Government any facilities which previous Governments had enjoyed with reference to the transaction of the necessary business of Finance. They might fairly claim to be enabled to place certain definite proposals before the House before a certain date. But he must frankly confess that he did not care to take away from ordinary Members of the House the time allotted to them by the Standing Orders, in order that the Government might dovote the time to the Introduction of Bills which were never intended or expected to be proceeded with, but which were merely introduced as baits to attract certain sections of their supporters into the Lobby—[*cries of* "Oh!"]—in support of Bills for which a majority could in no other way be obtained.

MR. ATHERLEY JONES (Durham, N.W.) said, that the House was not likely to get much assistance in the elucidation of this question from the Front Opposition Bench; because in previous year there had been a consensus of opinion between the two Front Benches as to the practice of infringing on the time of private Members. If the precedent of 1892 were referred to, it would be found that the Government at that time, at the instance of the present Leader of the Opposition, made a much larger demand upon the time of the House. It was for Morning Sittings on both Tuesday and Friday, and not only until Easter, but for the whole of the Session. He altogether challenged the statement which had been made—that the time of private Members was a matter of small importance. The discussions initiated by private Members were of great value in ripening subjects for the Government to take up subsequently; and he found from the Order Paper that there were many most valuable and practical proposals, including that of the hon. Member for Bethnal Green, which would be removed from the consideration of the House, if the Government were successful in their demand. The only case which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made out was this—that under the worst possible conditions there could only be three days for the discussion of the Estimates, and that under the best possible conditions there could be four days. That was a case for a large amount of time being conceded to the Government; but it was not a case for all the time for which the Government asked. He would suggest that the Government should take the whole of either Friday or Tuesday, or else, Morning Sittings on both days. In the latter event, if the Motions standing in the names of private Members proved to be of little importance, the House would undoubtedly be counted out after the Morning Sitting, and in view of the pressure put upon the House by the Government, it would not be an unwelcome contingency. But if the Motions were important, then private Members, notwithstanding the strain on their time, would certainly make a House. He believed that he was expressing the opinions of a considerable number of private Members, when he suggested a compromise on these lines; and the moderate speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer showed a desire to meet the reasonable wishes of the Government's supporters. As the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had followed the advice of the illustrious Member for Midlothian, who in 1892 said that he would be prepared to assent to the Government's Motion for taking the time of the House if it were not to be applied to the whole Session. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given no assurance that he would not after Easter appropriate a still larger share of the time of the House; and if that were his intention, it was one which could not be blamed.

Mr. J. REDMOND (Waterford) said, that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House had made out an absolutely conclusive case for asking for some time for the Government; and the case which the right hon. Gentleman had made out was not merely for this Government, but for all Governments. It was nothing short of an absurdity that there should be under the ordinary Standing Orders only two days a week reserved for Government business, which included not only financial business, but the programme of public Legislation. He was not one of those who sympathised very much with the grievance of private Members. He agreed that many great public questions had ripened into useful Legislation by being discussed in the House, time after time, on private Members' Motions. But neither this nor any Government proposed to deprive private Members of facilities of that kind. Under the present proposal private Members would have Wednesdays for their Bills, and Friday evenings for the discussion of matters of importance. As the right hon. Gentleman had said, many of these Evening Sittings resulted in the House being counted out, which meant that the subjects were not of enough importance to keep 40 Members. Holding these views, he could apply himself to the consideration of the motion without any danger of his judgment being upset by the piteous appeal of private Members. The House was aware of the fact that it was his view that Parliament should be dissolved. They were aware that his view was that the continued life of this Parliament could not result in any benefit to any part of the United Kingdom, and that since the Session commenced he had done his best to give effect to his views. Hon. Gentlemen opposite might congratulate themselves on the fact that he failed in his action. He was not quite sure that when a Dissolution came they would still be of opinion that it would have been unwise to dissolve now. The first fact in the present situation was, that Parliament was not going to be dissolved, and that this Session was going to be continued; the second was, that it was going to be a barren Session. The Leader of the House supposed that some of them would say that the Bills to be proposed by the Government would not pass. They were not saying so. The persons who had said so were the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary. But if these Bills would not pass, neither would the Bills or Resolutions of private Members. The House of Commons was to be turned into a great debating society. As a member of that debating society, his desire would be that the subjects for discussion should be as interesting and exciting as possible, and if he had to choose between such topics as he might fairly describe as the fads of individual private Members, on the one side, and great topics of public interest, such as Welsh Disestablishment, Irish Land, and Local Veto, on the other, naturally he would decide in favour of taking topics which would be exciting and interesting. For these reasons he would be inclined, if nothing else intervened, to support the Motion of the Leader of the House. But, before going the whole length of supporting that Motion, he would like to ask the Government respectfully whether they would give a little information about the course of business. There was a great Irish Land Bill on the stocks. It was probable that that Bill had not a chance of passing, but the "odds," the Chief Secretary for Ireland told them, had been "shortened." Still, the odds were heavily against it. But if there was to be a discussion on the Irish Land question at all, it would be interesting for the Irish Members to know at what period of the Session that discussion would take place.

SIR W. HARCOURT: At once.

MR. JOHN REDMOND, resuming, said they had been told that the Bill would be introduced as the Welsh Bill had been; and that, after the Welsh Bill had been disposed of, the Irish Land Bill would be read a second time. But when would that be? They had heard from the Leader of the House an account of the remaining time that the Government would have at its disposal, and it was perfectly evident to anybody who listened to his speech that the Second Reading of the Welsh Church Bill could not possibly be taken before April 1. For his own part, he did not see how, according to the time at the disposal of the Government, and the business to be done described by the Leader of the House, it was possible for the Welsh Church Bill and the Irish Bill to be read a second time before Easter. The time after that was what he, himself, was anxious about. He had tried to gather opinions as to the length of time the Welsh Bill would take in Committee, and it seemed to be the general view that it would take two months. This opinion was not confined to Members of the Opposition. He had heard it expressed by enthusiastic supporters of the Government and its Bill. If this was so, and the Committee stage of the Irish Land Bill was to be deferred until the Welsh Bill had been disposed of in Committee, the Irish Land Bill would not be taken until the middle of the dog days; and if the Government desired to afford the House of Lords an excuse which, in itself, would be considered sufficient for them to reject the Irish Land Bill, it would be by sending it to them, as it did the Evicted Tenants Bill—at the fag-end of the Session. Would the Leader of the House get up and state that he would push on the Committee on the Irish Land Bill concurrently with the Committee on the Welsh Bill? In other words, he would have four days a week at his disposal under the rule which, of course, would be extended to the rest of the Session—everybody knew—for Government business. Would he give two of those days every week to the Welsh Bill and two to the Irish Bill, or was it his intention to leave the Irish Bill to be taken up after two months in Committee on the Welsh Bill? He wished to make another suggestion. Last year a Scotch Grand Committee was appointed to deal with a Scotch Bill. This Irish Land Bill was a purely Irish question. Those in favour of the principle of Home Rule—and there was no more doughty exponent of the principle than the present

Leader of the House—ought to be in favour of the details of this great Irish Land Bill being settled in a Committee entirely composed of Irish Members. If the Leader of the House would not give two days a week in Committee to the Irish Land Bill and two days to the Welsh Bill, would he refer the Irish Bill, after it had been read a second time, to an Irish Grand Committee? If he would do either of those things, his benevolent attitude towards the Resolution might carry him to the unwonted length of going into the Lobby with him, but, in the absence of such a declaration, while he did not intend to vote against the time of the House being taken by the Government, he could not see his way to support it.

*Mr. H. W. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.) said the hon. and learned Member for Waterford had told the House that this would be a barren Session, and that the Irish Land Bill would not pass into law. How did he know that?

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Because the Prime Minister has said so.

*Mr. PAUL: But was that the opinion of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, who was as well acquainted with the Irish land question as the hon. and learned Member; was it the opinion of many Irish Members opposite? Would they do their best to prevent the Bill from passing into law? The hon. and learned Member knew perfectly well they would do nothing of the kind. The hon. Member had referred to the speeches of the Prime Minister during the Recess. He himself had studied those speeches carefully and respectfully. He was prepared to defend the arguments used in them, but he was not prepared to defend arguments imputed to the Prime Minister which he had never used. Lord Rosebery did not argue that it was useless to bring Bills into that House this Session because they would be thrown out by the House of Lords. What he said was that it was no use for Liberal Governments to introduce Liberal measures into that or any other House after the next or any other General Election, backed by a majority small or large, so long as a permanent Tory majority existed in another place to throw out every Bill a Liberal Government introduced. The right hon. Member for West Bristol did not say the House of Lords would throw out the Bills of the Government, but that this House would be unable to pass them, which was an entire change in the argument of the Opposition before and since the Session began. He did not altogether agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the importance of evening sittings; he had had some experience of Friday evenings, and had beaten the Government of one of them. There was one point upon which he desired to express his cordial concurrence with the right hon. Baronet, and that was the importance of bringing forward Supply at as early a period of the Session as possible. This motion would facilitate that object. The right hon. Baronet had taunted the Government with their failures in Legislation, but in that respect he was not in agreement with his political friend and ally the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. He should give his hearty support to the Motion, in order that the right hon. Baronet and the hon. and learned Member for Waterford might have an opportunity of obtaining that early Dissolution of Parliament which they desired.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, that events would prove whether this Session would be a barren one or not; he himself thought that "ploughing the sands of the sea shore" was not exactly the way to get a plentiful crop of anything. Like his hon. Friend who had just sat down, he had read the speeches of the Prime Minister carefully and respectfully, but he did not derive the same conclusions from them which his hon. Friend did. But when his hon. Friend went on to explain what these speeches were, so far as he could understand, his hon. Friend and himself were entirely of the same mind. His hon. Friend had pointed to the fact that Lord Rosebery had said that Liberal measures cannot be passed in this or any other Parliament until some alteration had been made in the Legislative powers of the House of Lords; but what was predicated of the whole was predicated of every part of it, and if Liberal measures could not be passed in this or any other Parliament, surely the idea was involved that Liberal measures could not be passed in this Parliament until the obstruction in the way of their becoming law was removed. He thought, therefore, that there was a good deal of agreement between his hon. Friend and himself upon the matter. He was able further to say that there was a good deal of agreement between his hon. Friend, the Prime Minister and himself upon this matter. He entirely agreed with his hon. Friend in saying that they must not expect much from the front Opposition Bench. The difficulty of the Front Opposition Bench in this matter always was that they had done much the same thing themselves, and they contemplated, when they managed to get themselves on to the Treasury Bench, doing the same thing again. He had not the slightest confidence in either of those two Benches in regard to matters relating to the rights of private Members. Sometimes they confederated together; sometimes, whoever was the Leader of the Opposition got up and said that he would oppose this *particular* proposal, because the circumstances of the particular moment rendered it necessary for him to do so; but when he got on to the Treasury Bench he proposed either the same thing, or something very like it. He professed he had not much confidence that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give back to private Members their time after Easter. It was very much like a lion offering to make two mouthfuls of him instead of one; they knew that appetite came from eating, in these matters. He had looked back to see how he had voted in regard to the motion of 1892, and found that then he voted for the proposal of the present Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Manchester, but the proposal then was that private Members should be left Tuesdays and Friday evenings, and if such a proposal were now made he would vote for it with the greatest pleasure. When first he came into the House private Members were looked upon as human beings; they then banded themselves together, and therefore they maintained their rights. Then they could, on going into Committee on Supply, move any Motion they liked, and then the Estimates were brought on at an early period of the year; occasionally, at the end of the Session, such a proposal as the present was made, but no one dreamt that private Members' nights should be swamped entirely, as it was now proposed. They were told that on private Members' nights the House was counted out. He had been very much struck by what was said by the hon. Member for Waterford, who pointed out thot every reform that had ever been carried in that House had been first aired by private Members. Private members put down Motions in favour of a reform, the majority in favour of it gradually increased, and then the Government took it up. Moreover, if they did away with the rights of private Members, they would deprive the Ministry of the day of all control except when the Opposition moved a vote of no confidence in the Government, and he thought that control over a Government by its followers was just as necessary as by the Opposition. That the Government should thus became absolutely independent of control or criticism, especially in regard to colonial and foreign matters, was, he thought, most undesirable, and he was unable to vote for the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. ELLIOTT LEES (Birkenhead) had placed on the Paper an Amendment to this Motion, but believed he would not be in order in moving that Amendment. The question raised, however, by the Amendment, seemed to him very much the same as that raised in the last two speeches, whether it was desirable that a Government, the members of which had announced in the recess that they could not carry out any useful public business during the Session, should take also the time which might be utilised by private Members to carry out measures of public utility. There was no urgent reason put forward why this should be done. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer would promise that after Easter, when the financial requirements of the country had been dealt with, he would give back to private Members the time he was now taking, he would support the Motion; but no such assurance was given. If this Motion was carried, very little time would be secured by private Members during the rest of the Session. Many of the Bills and Motions put down on the Order Book by private Members were quite as important to the people of the country as the measures announced in the Queen's Speech. They affected all classes, for among the questions to be dealt with were Old Age Pensions, Agricultural Holdings, the Condition of

Factories and Workshops, the Housing of the Working Classes, the Eight Hours Day for Miners, Trade Disputes, and the Payment of Members. There were also Motions down to call attention to the Armenian Atrocities and to the question of a Referendum, a matter which it was most important that the House should discuss as a preliminary canter to the great Resolution against the House of Lords which the Government had declared their intention to move. Now, some of those matters were in the hands of private Members opposite, and he was curious to know how they really regarded the proposal of the Government. He could understand a Government with an important policy and a serious determination to carry it out, bringing forward such a Motion, but the present Government had no such policy, and they all knew that it was not intended that the measures foreshadowed in the Queen's Speech should pass into law. They were only intended to be the means to an end. There was a proverb which declared that he who wished the end wished the means also. That might be true, but surely they had a right to demand from the Government that they should state, before this Motion was granted, what the end on their part was. Hitherto all information of the kind had been concealed from them, even concerning the great Resolution against the House of Lords by means of which the Government intended to frame a new Constitution. But, surely the Government could not suppose that any Resolution on so important and vital a question as this could be adequately and satisfactorily discussed at the fag end of a Session. It was only just and respectful to the House of Commons, therefore, that Ministers should explain how they meant to use the additional time if it was granted to them. Many hon. Members opposite had boasted to their constituents of the importance and advantages of the private Bills they had introduced and were going to place on the Statute Book. The absorption of the time of private Members, however, would prevent them from bringing those measures forward, and he should like to know, if they voted for this Motion, how they would explain their failure to their constituents, especially in the absence of any declaration from the Government how they were going to utilise the additional opportunities they had obtained. At any rate, believing that the Motion was not calculated, under the circumstances in which it was proposed, to exalt the character of the House, he should vote against it.

*MR. S. T. EVANS (Mid Glamorgan), who had an Amendment on the Paper exempting to-morrow's Sitting from the terms of the Motion, said he did not intend to move it. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford had stated that he was very anxious for a Dissolution on the ground that the present Session was going to be a barren one. He could not agree with the hon. Member. When the Home Rule Bill was before Parliament in 1893, the hon. Member and his Friends did not think that Session would be a barren one if only that House passed it, notwithstanding that it was well known the House of Lords would reject it. The Welsh Members held much the same opinion in respect to the present Session and the Bill for the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church. If they could obtain the imprimatur of the House of Commons for that measure, they would by no means regard the Session as a barren one, although the House of Lords might afterwards throw it out. The effect of the Amendment that stood on the Paper in his name was only to postpone the request of the Government for one day; otherwise he thought the Motion did not go far enough, for after Easter they would have to waste another day on a similar Motion. The object of his Amendment was to give the House a chance on the following day of discussing the question of Self Government for Wales. It was true that the Motion relating to the question was third on the Paper; still, there might have been a chance of reaching it, and the House of Commons would then have had an opportunity of asserting the opinion that when the time came for a devolution of powers all round, Wales would be no less entitled to Home Rule than Scotland or Ireland. He agreed with the hon. and learned Member for Waterford, that private Members had practically no grievance. The time had come when the Government might do what they proposed by Standing Order and not by periodical Motions like the present. The opportunities now given to private Members were really opportunities for wasting time. In the Sessions of 1891, 1892, and 1893, a Bill introduced by himself as a private Member was passed by huge majorities, and on one occasion it passed through the Standing Committee. But the whole time spent upon it was wasted, because its further progress was blocked in the House. He wanted the Government, if they took the whole of the time, to use that time. Let them make up their mind that work was to be done. It was of no use taking the time if there was to be no end of talk. And the Government might themselves set an example in this direction. He did not know why the First Reading of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill was not taken on Monday night, but it was probably by arrangement with the Front Bench. They had had quite enough of these arrangements between the two Front Benches, and he hoped that, in future, two or three Sittings would not be spent on the question of asking leave to introduce a Bill. In the case of the First Reading of the Irish Disestablishment Bill, the only speech made was by Mr. Disraeli, and it only occupied a quarter of an hour. It was quite touching to see the mutual admiration of the occupants of the two Front Benches; but Members in other parts of the House felt strongly that some other method might be found and adopted for the expression of this mutual admiration than by dishing up at great length old speeches, made in years gone by, by those who occupied the Treasury and Front Benches, in which those who had to listen to them did not take such an interest as the authors themselves. Much as he desired to get the opinion of the House on the question of Self Government for Wales, yet he was not unmindful of the fact that the Government had taken up as their first legislative business a measure in which he took the extremest interest, and in the circumstances he did not intend to move the Amendment.

*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK hoped the House would not assent to the proposal. The division of time between the Government and private Members had been very carefully considered, and ought not to be lightly disturbed. It was very important that private Members should have the opportunity of bringing forward questions in which the country was interested. The Government of the country did not consist merely in Legislation, but in Administration, and if the Tuesdays and Fridays were taken, the House lost the opportunity of making suggestions and criticisms. It was, of course, true that on private Members' nights the House was sometimes counted out. But that was not altogether a disadvantage. A rest now and then was a great relief, not only to hon. Members, and especially to Government, but above all to the Officials of the House. It would be easy to show that a great deal of useful Legislation was the wish of private Members. He might mention the Public Libraries Act, the Open Spaces Act, that regulating Cheques and Bills, and many more. Besides which, many which were eventually carried by Government, had been rendered possible by the previous labour of the private Members. Indeed, there were many Bills which were more easily carried by private Members, because if they were supported on both sides of the House, as happily was often the case, they were divested of any party character. There had been two Tuesdays since the closing of the Debate on the Queen's Speech; no one could say they were wasted. There had been two important Debates, and the House had passed the second reading of the Early Closing Bill, which shopkeepers and shop assistants all over the country were watching with intense interest. Moreover, if Government carried their motion they would sbut out several subjects of great interest. Next Tuesday, there is a motion respecting the Taxation of Ground Rents. Probably it might require amendment, but a Committee of this House, presided over by the right. hon. Gentleman, the Member for St. George's, had reported in favour of modifying the present system, and the London County Council had passed an unanimous resolution in support of it. Would hon. Members representing Radical constituencies, assist in shutting out the consideration of this question? If so it would be felt that they had no real anxiety for the change. He passed over several important motions, and would only refer to one other, which also affected London interests.

The London Members believed that London received from the Imperial Exchequer some £300,000 less than her fair share. He had brought the question before the House more than once at the suggestion of his colleagues on the London County Council. He proposed to ask for a Committee, which be thought was a reasonable request, and had put it down for Tuesday 12th. If the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was adopted, what possible chance would there be of bringing the question forward this Session. He hoped his hon. Friends in the London County Council would not throw him over. If they did, London would lose this large sum of money, amounting to a rate of more than 2d., and they must answer for it to the people of London. He appealed then to all London Members not to vote for a motion which would shut out the consideration of a question so important to London Ratepayers.

The House divided:—Ayes, 236: Noes, 221.—(Division List, No. 17.)

FATAL ACCIDENTS INQUIRY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of the Lord Advocate, Bill to make Provision for Public Inquiry in Regard to Fatal Accidents occurring in Industrial Employments or Occupations in Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time: to be read a second time on Thursday next, and to be printed. [Bill No. 143.]

WELSH DISESTABLISHMENT BILL.

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on the Motion for leave to bring in the Established Church (Wales) Bill.

*VISCOUNT WOLMER (Edinburgh, W.) said, that the Home Secretary had promised to go into the principles underlying the Bill on the occasion of its Second Reading. There were one or two points to which he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would devote his attention when that time came, and explain how it was that the Bill would affect the spiritualities as well as the temporalities of the Church. The Church of England was an indivisible whole, but this Bill practically proposed cutting off a limb. What would be the position of the Welsh Church in the future in regard to her Parliament—Convocation; and what would be the position of her Members in regard to that body? They would sit only as guests, and not with the legal rights they now enjoyed. Supposing they sat in Convocation in those circumstances, and a Motion of some kind or another were carried by their aid, would the carrying of such Motion be legal or otherwise? That was one point upon which he hoped the Home Secretary would give the House some information. According to the present law any question involving the ritual of the Church went through a series of courts, ending finally in the Privy Council; but under this Bill a change would be made in so far as the Church in Wales was concerned, by which the final court would be, not the Privy Council, but the House of Lords. Now if some case were to arise, say, analogous to the celebrated Lambeth Judgment, which was upheld by the Privy Council, and taken to the House of Lords, there might be brought about an absolutely conflicting judgment with regard to a great question of rites which would lead to grave complications; and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not overlook the necessity of making some statement upon that view of the matter also. He remembered the eloquent way in which the right hon. Gentleman introduced the Bill last year, and the indignant terms in which he asked his opponents to believe that he and his Party were not actuated by any feelings of malice towards the Church. Were they not entitled to take the pronouncements of the Prime Minister as the basis on which the Government were proposing to act?

> "—that the State could deal with the Endowments of the Church now because the State had taken them from the Old Church and given them to the Reformed Church at the Reformation."

If they took up that attitude, surely what was now proposed was spoliation —the taking away from the Church all benefactions which had been given to the Church prior to 1703, which included the benefactions from the Reformation to 1703—say 150 years—all given, on Lord Rosebery's own showing, to the same Church as now possessed them. They were told that the funds which were to be taken away were still to be devoted "to religious purposes." He thought that was a paltry attitude to assume, and not worthy of his right hon. Friend. The purposes were good purposes, no one would deny that, but it was playing with words to pretend that they were religious purposes. When they spoke of religious purposes, they meant something containing the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, but the funds were to be devoted to purposes which would commend themselves equally to Christians and Atheists. They had had several speeches from the Welsh Members, and he must say that he did not think the Church had any reason to complain of the tone of those speeches. They were characterised by a fairness which had not always characterised speeches which they had heard even in that House. Differing as he did from those hon. Members, he paid that tribute to them. But what had been their general tone? The Welsh Members had spoken of the triumph of the Voluntary principle. One hon. Member boasted that while the Church contributed voluntarily only £250,000, the Nonconformists contributed voluntarily £400,000. Was his hon. Friend then prepared to admit that the Church contained 5-13ths of the population? ["No."] What then became of his argument? If it did not contain 5-13ths of the population, the Church contributed voluntarily more than the Nonconformists. It was no extrication from the dilemma to say that Churchpeople were so much richer. No doubt that was an important consideration, but the fact remained that, richer or poorer, the Church did give more per head than the Nonconformist bodies. His hon. Friend, the Member for Carmarthen, paid a generous tribute to the life of the Church in Swansea and Cardiff, and he asked how it was that it was so vigorous, and he replied: "Because there are no Endowments." He had heard that before. In Cardiff the Endowments of tithes were £370 only, and in Swansea, £204 only, but that did not exhaust the Endowments affected by that Bill. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners contributed £470 to Cardiff, and £999 to Swansea, so that the amount which would be affected by the Bill would be respectively £840 and £1,183. He maintained that, noble as Voluntaryism was, as a sign of life and energy in a Church, it was incapable itself of doing the necessary spiritual work properly. Nonconformists all through the country were endeavouring to supplement their voluntary contributions by permanent Endowments The number of schemes submitted during the last ten years, 760 in all, to the Charity Commissioners, showed that the Nonconformists were feeling the want of Endowments, and were trying gradually to build them up. But it was not only a question of Church or Nonconformity. Take the case of hospitals. Had they not proof positive that the conviction that Endowments are necessary in regard to hospitals had made progress? In fact, the principle had made such progress, that the London County Council had proposed to give them one of the most stable of all Endowments — the rates of London. The hospital fund collected in London for 1894, amounted to £35,400. The amount obtained by collections in churches of the Church of England was £28,500; and the collections of other religious bodies outside the Church amounted to £7,000. Next to the Church stood the Congregationalists, whose collections amounted to £1,500. He did not suppose for a moment that £1,500 was the measure of the generosity of the Congregational body, certainly not; he would be the last person to suppose that it represented the full measure of the sympathy of that body. It was the duty of the Congregationalists, as of all other bodies, to think of their own denomination first; and it was because the Church had the privilege and the advantage of large Endowments from deceased Churchmen and Churchwomen that she was able to spare for great national purposes a part of the funds which, in the event of Disendowment, she would be obliged to devote to purely Church purposes. An attempt had been made to explain why the Voluntary system did not succeed in planting a resident Nonconformist minister in every parish in Wales; it was said that many of them were so small in area and population that there was no necessity for a resident minister. In this respect Wales did not differ so very much from England; but in Wales, out of a total of 1,081 parishes, there were 485 in which there was no resident minister except the clergyman. In the face of these figures it was impossible to say that Voluntarism had covered the ground and provided all that was needed. As to the number of hearers in the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist body, the alleged total of 292,000 included 25,000 resident in Manchester and Liverpool, so that the smaller total of 268,000 was the more correct. Objection had been taken to the citation of election statistics because it was said Unionist candidates supported Disestablishment; but it was overlooked that the three seats for Anglesey, Carmarthen, and Cardigan were contested in 1892 by avowed supporters of Disestablishment, and Disendowment in 1885 and 1886 by avowed supporters of the Church; and, whereas the aggregate poll for the Disestablishment candidates in 1892 was 7,203, the total poll of avowed supporters of the Church at the previous elections was 9,186. Thus there was a loss of votes to the disestablishing Unionists; Churchmen could not vote for them, and personally he did not wonder. In commencing the struggle he would ask opponents, once for all, to realise the position of Churchmen. They held that the Church in England and in Wales was one and indivisible, that it had existed since Christianity was introduced into these islands—the English branch from St. Augustine and the Welsh from the earlier missionaries; and the Endowments of the Church, without exception, had been voluntary gifts to the Church; and that there was no difference in principle between a sixpence put into the offertory next Sunday and tithe granted by pious Churchmen or Churchwomen 800 or 1,000 years ago. That was their position; and opponents would spare themselves trouble and avoid wounding the feelings of Churchmen unnecessarily if they said nothing more about adopting a timely compromise. The right hon. Member for Denbighshire said that this was the best offer the Church was likely to get; and he talked about the Sybilline Books, which was a strange reference to make in arguing the question ostensibly on religious principles, as if it were to be determined, not on its intrinsic merits, but by political expediency. To talk in this way was a waste of breath, and, if it were repeated, it would be an insult to those who held the Church to be one and indivisible. To ask them to compromise was to ask them to be faithless to their trust. It was said that the flower of the clergy at Bangor proposed that Churchmen should accept Disestablishment without Disendowment; but they did not represent any but themselves. They would not obtain the support of any diocesan conference. And was there, he asked, a single Welsh Member who would accept that compromise? There was no response to that question; then, what was the use of making hypocritical speeches in praise of a scheme which the Welsh Members themselves would not accept? The Bill not only ran athwart the beliefs of Churchmen as to the nature of the Church and as to its future mission, but it wounded them in their reason and in their deepest sentiments. Did the Home Secretary realise the imagination and the sentiment that in the minds of Churchmen hung around cathedrals and churchyards? No other outward and visible signs appealed so deeply to their feelings. For centuries their forefathers had worshipped in these cathedrals, and had been buried in these churchyards, and to hand them over to National Commissioners and Parish Councils would wound Churchmen deeply. It was said the Church in Wales was doomed, but, with the profoundest respect for the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, he did not believe for a moment that she was doomed; but, just as 20 years ago there was no majority against her, so 20 or 30 years hence there might be no such majority; and two generations was but a short time in the life of a Church which had existed thirteen centuries, Believing that the Bill was intrinsically unjust, and that there lay before the Church in Wales centuries of useful work and acceptance at the hands of the people, he would offer to the Bill all the opposition that he could.

Viscount Wolmer.

SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, that it was with some reluctance that he rose to take part in the Debate at this stage of the discussion, after having had the privilege of hearing the speech of the noble Lord who had spoken with so much knowledge of the subject, and with so much elevating fervour. He regretted that the right hon. Baronet, the Member for East Denbighshire, was not present on that occasion. On the first night of the Debate, the right hon. Baronet complained of the Church Defence Institution, on the ground that that society had insulted the people of

Wales. It had been his privilege to take part in the Councils of that Society for some years, and he denied the charge of the right hon. Gentleman. He trusted that, before the Debate concluded, so grave an accusation would be withdrawn or substantiated. They had, on many occasions, submitted their views to audiences in Wales, and they had uniformly received courtesy and consideration. He was sure, therefore, that no insult could have been offered to the Welsh people by the Church Defence Institution. He had asked the Home Secretary, in the course of his exposition of the Bill, what the scheme of the Government was respecting Cathedrals. He could not believe that the right hon· Gentleman, with his forensic skill and ability, could have excepted Cathedrals except by express purpose and design. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Midlothian, in his first scheme dealing with the Irish Church, entrusted a certain number of Churches—he believed there were 12—to the supervision of commissioners, but before the scheme became law these 12 great Churches were placed in the same category as the rest. As that proposal failed in the Irish Church Bill, so he believed that a similar proposal would fail now. It had been well said, that sentiment clustered round Cathedrals; and probably no buildings were surrounded with more hallowed associations than the Welsh Cathedrals. They were founded in the sixth or seventh century, and portions of the ancient structures could still be recognised by antiquaries. Now, after more than 1,000 years, it was proposed by a Government, calling itself Liberal and desiring to be thought enlightened, to hand over these edifices to the County Councils and purely secular authorities. These Churches had been maintained and restored by the voluntary efforts of succeeding generations, and during the present age £117,000 had been expended on these buildings. Llandaff Cathedral had been raised from a state of ruin to a condition of great beauty and magnificence, and the Church of St. David, once almost desolate, had now been, as regards the more important part of the structure, beautifully restored under the careful superintendence of the Dean and the loving guidance of Sir Gilbert Scott. The Government were not only proposing to desecrate sanctuaries, but were violating their own principle that modern Endowments ought not to be interfered with. It was suggested that the Church in Wales was alien because it was opposed, and always had been opposed, to the national movement. Of all Welshmen in Wales who were true Welshmen there were none more true than members of the Church. Those who had the privilege of the acquaintance of the Welsh Bishops must know that each and all of those prelates were thoroughly national in all their sentiments, and as entirely Welsh as any Welshman who could represent Wales in the House of Commons. He regretted very much there was not in Wales a religious census. There was such a census in Ireland, in Australia, in Canada, and in the United States. When he looked to the facts in Wales he greatly doubted whether the census of the ballot-box, as had been contended, truly represented Wales in this matter. He had a growing conviction that the pious and devout Nonconformists of Wales were beginning to look askance at this Bill. They did not believe that this controversy was being conducted in a spirit which would favour the growth of Christianity among them. They believed that in these days' when so many attacks were being made upon Christianity, it was necessary to strengthen every agency for good. They did not believe that the best comfort and hope could be found in removing from their midst those who uttered the words of solace and consolation. The right hon. Gentleman said that the new purposes to which the funds were to be devoted were as much religious as the Church itself. In making that remark he was mistaking the fruit for the tree. Cottage hospitals, trained nurses, convalescent homes, labourers' dwellings, and the rest were the fruits and the results and the consequences of Christianity; and if they were to weaken the forces of Christianity, then they would not have the same sympathy for the poor, the same disposition to heal their sorrows, or to soothe them in their grief. Could anyone say that the cause of religion would be as much promoted by libraries, or museums, or academies of art, as by the preaching of the Gospel and the ministrations from house to house of a pious priest? It was a mockery to lay before the House an argument of that sort. There was a great contrast between the scheme for the disestablishment of the Irish Church and the plan of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Midlothian, in dealing with the Irish Church, said: "he had a desire that no unnecessary hardship should be inflicted." He went on to say—

> "Every motive that can appeal to the feelings of men of honour and gentlemen must lead us to feel it a duty so to proceed with this measure that it shall carry with it no unnecessary penalty or pain."

And then again—

> "All are equally anxious that the Irish Church, at a period when all its Members and Ministers will be called upon to exert themselves to the utmost, should not be subjected to the disadvantages of a cripple ecclesiastical organization."

and further—

> "This transition should be attended not with the maximum but with the minimum of change."

and then he added that these principles led the Government to adopt—

> "the principle of commutation, so that the clergy might pass from one condition to the other with least possible friction."

In this case the Church would be called upon to undergo a process, he would not say of bleeding to death, but of blood-letting which will seriously imperil its vitality. They were told that in the colonies great advantage was gained by the absence of an Established Church. The views of the Bishop of Manchester were not in that sense, and the Bishop of Bath and Wells had borne emphatic testimony that the antagonism, and the disadvantages which arose from sectarian differences, were far more keen in Adelaide than in England. Then they came to the United States. Had the absence of a national church promoted unity? The citizens of that great republic had not shrunk from a religious census. He had in his hand an official report of that census. One of the first questions which might be asked was, What had been the result of the absence of an Established Church upon religious unity? The reporter described the position of an American citizen. He said:—

> "An American citizen may be a member of any one of 143 denominations, or of all in succession. If none of those suit him, he still has a choice of 150 separate and independent congregations, which have no denominational name, creed or connection. In no quarter of the globe have the Lutherans, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, or the Baptists, the Friends, or the Memnonites, separated into so many branches as here in this land of perfect civil and religious liberty."

Sir F. S. Powell.

Then came the effect of all these organisations upon the religion of America, and he found these words:—

> "One out of every twelve persons is either an active or passive opponent of religion; two out of every three members are not members of any Church."

He thought he might fairly say that in the judgment of the Americans themselves, as shown in their documents, the condition of affairs in America had not by any means proved that great advantages arose from the absence of a national church. He was tempted to ask, what would be the loss to the people of Wales from Disestablishment? He believed, himself, that a nation derived advantages from the national recognition' of Christianity. He believed it was to the advantage of a people that everyone should have the right to religious ministrations; and why should they take away that right from the people of Wales? He believed the existence of a national church was really a bond of union which drew together all classes in a parish, and the church belonged to the poor man every whit as much as to the rich man. He asked what would be the effect on education in Wales from Disestablishment? The tale of the board schools was a truly melancholy story. Of 300 board schools in Wales (excluding Monmouthshire) there were 123 schools where there was no bible read at all, and 119 where it was read without comment, whilst in 290 cases out of the 300 there was no examination whatever in religious knowledge. Anyone acquainted with the work of schools would agree with him when he said that education to be perfect and sound must be brought, in some form or other, to the test by means of examination. If the Welsh people desired to have Christianity taught to their children in the six days of the week, they must send them to the voluntary schools. He found that in the Church Voluntary Schools, in the diocese of St. Asaph, there were 18,571 children, in the Board Schools 10,766, in the British Schools 3,319. That was to say that the 10,000 children who attended the Board Schools must be transferred to other schools in order to obtain that knowledge in religion which he believed to be absolutely necessary to develop the religious life of a young child. They had not only to deal with elementary education, but also with Welsh intermediate education. What were they told was the desire of the Welsh in this respect? They had had schemes proposed, and only abrogated by the action of the House of Lords, preventing any child of a Churchman receiving instruction in any of the formularies of the Church of England in any boarding-master's house. Amongst the formularies of the Church of England so forbidden, were some of the collects read every day in the House of Commons at the commencement of their proceedings. He thought it was an act of persecution that children of Church people in Wales should not be allowed to learn—not at the schools, but at the boarding houses—the very collects which hon. Members were accustomed to hear read day after day in that House. They came, then, to the effect of endowments on religion. What was the opinion of every Christian body throughout the world which had no Endowments? Were they content to go up and down the world exposed to all the chances and changes of uncertainty? No, in every case they were building up Endowments. This applied to the members of the Free Church of Scotland, to the Roman Catholics, and to the various Nonconformist bodies, and were all these Endowments to be protected by the law, whilst those of the Church were to be pillaged by the law? He wanted to know the reason why there should be this inequality of treatment? With regard to the question of figures, he did not believe the numbers of the members of the Church in Wales could be put at less than 700,000, whilst those of all the other denominations did not exceed 800,000. He was glad to see the President of the Board of Trade present, and he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would pardon his calling attention to some words which fell from him in 1892. The right hon. Gentleman thought it necessary to explain away the force of the numbers of the Welsh Church-goers by condemning their religion, and he said:—

> "It seems to me that those in Wales in whom the spirit, life and conviction of religion is doing work, attach themselves to the Nonconformists, and only a small proportion to the Church of England."

What right and title had the right hon. Gentleman to bring an accusation like that against Churchmen in Wales? He believed the accusation was totally unjust and wholly unfounded in fact. Could people who were liable to such an imputation have spent the magnificent sums which had been expended during the last few years in Wales? They had of late years spent £117,000 on cathedrals, between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 on churches, and upwards of £2,000,000 on schools. Then they were told that all this money had been spent in vain, that their religion was a mere brick and mortar religion, and that they had erected edifices and could find no congregations to fill them. His answer to the accusation was plain and simple. He did not believe the Welsh people were such fools. He could not think they attached so little importance to £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 of money that they could squander it without any result. On the contrary, he found that the number of those attending their churches and Sunday schools was steadily and rapidly increasing. The old Church was the Church of the forefathers of the present generation. True enough, there was once coldness, dulness, apathy, and a want of religion, but even in those days pious men hoped for better things, and said that ere long the lamp of religion would burn again with purity and with brightness in the Welsh Church. He thought that Churchmen and Nonconformists alike should continue in possession of their endowments, both of which were the result of voluntary gift. Let both Churchmen and Nonconformists, if not together, at least side by side, continue their holy work of spreading the influences of Christianity throughout the land, bringing comfort to every household, solace to the sick, strength to the feeble, and to the powerful and strong lessons of mercy, charity, and loving-kindness to their weak, lowly, and afflicted neighbours.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) had no hesitation in rising to take part in the discussion, because he considered it the duty of anybody who regarded himself as a staunch member of the Church to oppose a political move, as this undoubtedly was. He did not look upon this as simply a Bill for Disestablishing and Disendowing the Church in Wales, but as a Suspensory Bill for Disestablishing and Disendowing the Church in England and Wales. The supporters of the measure themselves supplied evidence as to what was really meant. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Denbighshire speaking a good many years ago, in reference to a Motion of this sort, said, that whilst he was strongly in favour of Disestablishment, he did not like the long agony of piecemeal Disestablishment, which was like putting a man to death by tearing him limb by limb. He noticed that the right hon. Gentleman now objected to being bound to any views he might have held so long ago as 25 years. Only nine years ago, however, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer said, the question of the Church in Wales could not really be separated from the question of the Church in England. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, speaking on the occasion of the Introduction of the Redistribution of Seats Bill, said—

> "I wish to point out that Wales never has been dealt with separately, and on any separate principle, in any Reform Bill. The distinction between England and Wales, except in the recital of an Act of Parliament, for the purpose of indicating their unity, is totally unknown to our Constitution."

If that were the case, surely he and his hon. Friends were justified in treating the question of Welsh Disestablishment as part of the general question of Disestablishment. And they ought to be able to appeal to hon. Gentlemen on the Liberal Benches, to apply now the same argument which they used two years ago in the discussion on the Home Rule Bill. At that time a small portion, but a very strong and influential portion of the Irish people, appealed to the House, that they might be treated differently to the rest of Ireland, in being allowed to remain united to England. The majority opposite, however, said, "No, you must be bound by the prevalent opinion of Ireland." The Church in England and the Church in Wales was one and indivisible, and he maintained that the same argument adduced two years ago in the case of Home Rule, should be applied in the case of the Church, under which the main body in the Church should rule. In the discussion on the Irish Disestablishment Bill, one of the Ministers of the Crown said—

> "In this question, we have offended a clique, to conciliate a nation."

He suggested that they should take care that in this case, in conciliating a clique, they did not offend a larger nation than was concerned in the case of Irish Disestablishment. Hon. Members were referred to the case of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, notwithstanding all the protests of leading men at the time that that could never be taken as a precedent in the case of Wales. The Irish case was cited as a precedent in the Debate last year. It was then stated by the President of the Local Government Board that the Church in Ireland had prospered enormously since her Disestablishment, that greater peace was prevalent among the Sects, and that the Church had enlarged her borders. Such, however, was not the opinion of the Bishop of Derry, or of the late Archbishop Magee. He (Mr. Hardy) did not think the experience in the Irish case justified Parliament in applying to any portion of the United Kingdom the same drastic remedy which was attempted to be applied to Ireland 25 years ago. If the Church were to be Disestablished and Disendowed, was it not only fair that she should be treated on the analogy of the charitable trusts which were alluded to by Lord Rosebery at Cardiff. The Prime Minister mentioned charitable trusts as rather justifying the application of money to other purposes than it had hitherto been applied to. In dealing with a charitable trust, two things were always considered—namely, whether the trust had failed in its object, and whether the means were too large to fulfil the original object of the Trust. Could it be said that the endowments in Wales were too large? In introducing this Bill last year, the Government confessed that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were giving £40,000 a year more to Wales than they took out of it. As to whether there was still an object to pursue, every sort of statistic could be pointed to, to prove that the Church was still endeavouring to do her duty, and that if she could only be relieved from the necessity of turning her attention to these political matters, she could do more than she was doing at the present moment. Churchmen were most annoyed by the manner in which it was proposed to deal with the possessions of the Church. They felt deeply the Home Secretary's allusion to what he called the religious purposes set forth in the Schedule of the Bill. It was robbery under the excuse of alms-giving. What a mockery it was to take the money of the Church to establish academies of Art; which attained its highest and noblest achievements when it was the handmaiden of Religion. As to whether the Church was dying out in Wales or not, there was plenty of evidence that she was in a healthy and flourishing condition from the mouths, not of her own members, but of witnesses outside her ranks. At the Baptist Union recently, the Rev. Mr. Shakespeare said there was only one word that described the position of that Sect in many of the great centres of population—namely, the word "failure," and he added "the Church of England, at least in the towns, is rapidly becoming the Church of the people." Again, the defeated Liberal Candidate in Worcestershire declared, as his firm opinion, that the reason why the Liberal Party were losing seats in the counties was, that rural Dissent was ceasing to exist. These statements showed that the Church was doing its duty both in town and country. It was said by the opponents of the Church, that the Bill was an attack upon vested interests. But there was one vested interest to which he had heard no allusion in the course of the Debate—namely, the vested interest the poor had to claim admittance to the services of the Church of England at all times. It was only last year that one of the large Nonconformist Sects in Wales sent out a circular to its ministers, saying that they must not cut off people from their membership because they had not paid their contributions, as church people might say that Dissent was not ministering to the poor. At any rate, that could never be alleged against the Church of England. There were places always in her churches for the poor, and her ministers were always ready and willing to help them in time of need. Another great injustice done by the Bill was, that it took from them the burial-grounds surrounding their churches, up to the very doors of the churches. Churchmen in Wales would no longer be able to enlarge their churches when the need for enlargement arose, because the grounds would belong to the County Council. Their tenderest emotions were associated with these burial-grounds, they had possessed them for hundreds of years; and it was hard that they should not have at least the same justice which was done to Dissenting bodies by an Act passed in 1844, which declared that if a burial-ground was attached to any meeting-house for 25 years, it was to be considered as belonging to the congregation of such meeting-house. It might be said that those were matters of detail, but when the Bill got into Committee, they would be fought hard against to the very last.

MR. VICARY GIBBS (Herts., St. Albans) said that anyone who had listened to the Debate last year, must be struck by the change of tone in the advocates of Disestablishment when referring to the Church. They now had the Welsh Members, with perfect honesty, admitting that the Church was growing and prospering in Wales, and saying they wished her to grow and prosper. He was glad that hon. Members from Wales took that line. It was a much more charitable and amiable line than the line they took last year. But let them consider where this new line landed them. The acts of persecution and proselytism alleged against the Church last year, were untrue. If those acts had been true, they would have afforded considerable justification for disestablishing and disendowing the Church in Wales. But if the Church was prospering in Wales and benefiting the people of Wales, where was the moral justification of the Bill? Here was a great aggregate Corporation, which, it could not be historically disputed, was the owner of the funds, much of which had nothing to do with the State whatever, and yet the State proposed to deprive that aggregate Corporation of its funds without any justification, for no one now dared to allege that the Church had misused her funds. It might be the hon. Members opposite would say—

> "We do not base our argument on that at all; we do not concern ourselves with whether or not the Church in Wales had misused her funds, but we say we could make better use of these funds."

But if that argument were a sufficient justification, why did the Home Secretary stop at the year 1703? If the principle of endowment were bad, why did not the right hon. Gentleman choose the day the Bill became law? It might be said, too, by hon. Members opposite,—"We are friends of religious equality." A pretty religious equality they were going to introduce into Wales. They were going to allow the Dissenting Chapels to retain their endowments and take away the endowments of the Church of England, so that the position in Wales would be, the Church without endowments against Dissent with endowments. But it was not difficult to guess why the year 1703 had been chosen. Because all the endowments of the Church were anterior to that date, and all the endowments of Nonconformity posterior to that date. Hon. Members from Wales also said that they would not have a privileged Church in Wales. But no supporters of the Bill had said what these privileges were, simply because they were non-existent. What were the privileges of a poor parson in Wales, struggling on what would be considered a miserable pittance in any other profession, to do his duty to the people? It was said that the squire often asked him to dinner. Did they suppose they would stop the squire asking the parson to dinner by disestablishing the Church? The only privilege the Church enjoyed was that her bishops were represented in another place. He believed it was an advantage that a religion which was professed by the enormous majority of the people of the United Kingdom should be represented directly in the Legislature. That might be a very silly idea; and if it were, it would be a justification for voting in favour of Disestablishment; but surely it was no argument for Disendowment. He was astonished that the Welsh Members, whose ability could not be disputed for one moment, should be so short-sighted as not to see that by their action in this matter they were playing the game of their bitterest enemy. They plumed themselves on their strong religious convictions; and yet they were fighting against the Church of England which was engaged with them in the battle against Secularism in this country. The religious community that would benefit most by the Bill, if carried, was the Roman Church. It was true the members of that Church in the House were going to vote with the Government, but they would do so in accordance with a pure political bargain, connected with matters of an entirely different character; and without the sanction, or encouragement of the authorities of their Church. It was said in the course of the debate that the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Bristol, had confused the question of Disestablishment with religion. Their position was that the cause of religion would suffer, not irreparably, but a cruel wrong if the Bill were passed. The Church of England must act through human instruments, and it was the most monstrous cant to talk of spiritualising the Church and removing her from the worldly influence of riches by taking away her property. Although they might be a stupid party, they were not so stupid as not to see very plainly that, if the money now spent in giving religious privileges to the Welsh people were taken away, the cause of sectarianism would be advanced, and the cause of religion would retrograde. The Home Secretary asked whether there was no refining influence about art galleries. Was there no degrading influence about offering a bribe to people to sacrifice the money spent on their spiritual welfare for the sake of their material benefit? Was there no refining influence in the religion of which they would be deprived? But the strongest position of the supporters of the measure was that they included 31 out of 34 Welsh Members. Everyone would admit that that was a Home Rule argument. But this was not a Welsh Church that was to be Disestablished as distinguished from an English Church. It was an integral part of the English Church which was being attacked in its weakest part. None of the advocates of the Bill had been dishonest enough to suggest that this was not an attack on the English Church. Everyone knew that this was intended to be the beginning of the end; and that if the Church of England in Wales were Disestablished, the position of the Church in other parts of England would be immensely weakened, as practically the principle of Establishment would be gone. But if this were to be done on Home Rule lines, why not have Home Rule in Wales first? On what grounds was Wales to be treated differently from Ireland? One of the most striking features of the Irish Home Rule Bill, was a clause prohibiting any dealing with the question of an Establishment; and yet Wales, for which Home Rule was not proposed, was to have the power of dealing with the Established Church. The Welsh were to be allowed to inflict an injury on the Church, which by far the largest number of the people of England believed to be the best, while the Irish were not allowed to assist the religion which they believed to be best. How had the National feeling in Wales been produced? Were there not a great many partially educated people in Wales who had been led to believe that the effect of this measure would be to relieve them from what they erroneously imagined to be a burden on the land? [Several hon. MEMBERS: "No."] The reading of hon. Members' speeches delivered in the country was not calculated to contradict the impression. There had been a great deal of indirect bribery. The Welsh people had been told that their material interests would be benefited by disendowment; and that bribery had been increased by the allocation of the funds which the Home Secretary proposed. But the true ground of the attack was stated by an hon. Member last year. He said—

> "The cause was obvious. The Welsh people were Radicals and the Church was Tory."

Here was the reason in its most contemptible form. A great political party drove a Church into hostility, and then, because it was hostile, took away its property. Lord Rosebery had given the same reasons for attacking the Scotch Church. As to the question of the census, he knew that hon. Members for Wales did not like public censuses. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Denbigh (Sir G. O. Morgan) had said—

> "What would a census show? It would only prove the number of the members of the Church of England and not their opinions."

True, but what objection was that to a census? Why did hon. Members shrink from the results of that census being revealed? If it was immaterial to the issue, why were they afraid of it? (Several hon. MEMBERS: "We are not.") Then what had become of the private census, taken by the Welsh Dissenters at their own time and by their own people? From that day to this they had been afraid to reveal what the results of that census were.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE (Carnarvon Burghs): The hon. Member is quite incorrect. Those figures have been published. I have them with me.

MR. VICARY GIBBS: The whole of them?

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: Yes.

MR. V. GIBBS said, that the whole of those figures had never been revealed to the public, though they might have been to the hon. Member. No doubt the hon. Member had good reason for keeping them to himself. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Denbigh gave as one of the reasons why Churchmen should accept the measure, that it was the best that they would ever get, and that nothing could avert the doom which was to fall. The Church party might be stupid, but they were not so cowardly as to be influenced by threats of that kind. He would say to the right hon. Baronet, "There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats." The hon. right Baronet the Member for Denbighshire said the Welsh Church was an alien Church, his evidence for it being a statement by Professor Goldwin Smith.

*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbigh, E.), interposing, said he quoted the statements of a number of distinguished Welsh Clergy that the Welsh Church was not a national Church.

MR. VICARY GIBBS said that, to refresh his memory, he had carefully read the report of the hon. Baronet's speech in the *Times*. The hon. Baronet quoted as his evidence a remark of Professor Goldwin Smith that the Welsh peasant would never be a fervid Anglican. The hon. Baronet carried loose thinking to the extremest verge consistent with the exercise of the reasoning faculty; but even he would not pretend that a casual remark by Professor Goldwin Smith constituted sufficient evidence. The hon. Baronet referred to "the little rift within the lute" among his opponents. The only evidence of any such rift that he seemed to rely on was that possibly the right hon. Member for West Birmingham would not vote with them on this matter. The manifesto signed by Welsh clergymen to which the hon. Baronet referred was only signed by four. Had there ever been a party or community which had not contained a few men ready to betray the fortress they were maintained to defend?

Mr. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): Does the new Bishop of Hereford betray it?

Mr. VICARY GIBBS: By the grace of Lord Rosebery we now have a Disestablishment Bishop, but does he represent the voice of the Church and her clergy?

*Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN: The evidence I adduced was entirely from Wales. [*Opposition Cries of* "Oh!"] I adduced the statements of five leading Welsh clergymen. As to the evidence of English clergymen or English laymen, who know nothing of Wales, I do not value it in the least.

Mr. VICARY GIBBS said he was not concerned with the value which the hon. Baronet attached to the opinions of the English clergy. All he wished to show was that he had only quoted the opinions of four clergymen from Wales. With regard to the allocation scheme proposed by the Bill, the Conservative Members of the House were unanimously against it. His hon. Friend the Member for Tunbridge had been accused of having misrepresented the numbers of the Calvinistic Methodists. Quoting from the *Calvinistic Methodist Year Book* for 1892-3, he gave them as 268,000. But they were said to be 292,000. Those figures were, however, arrived at by adding all the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists who resided in England. The President of the Board of Trade had said that the Church of England was a new Church at the time of Henry VIII., which had become possessed of property of the Roman Catholic Church. If it was a new Church, it must have had its title by the approval of Parliament and the Crown, but no such thing had taken place. For the sake of argument he would admit that the President of the Board of Trade's proposition, that the Church of England in Wales was a new Church, was correct. What, then, became of the statements that the origin of tithes was buried in the mists of ages? If it was a new Church it must have had its title by the approval of Parliament and the Crown. No such thing, however, had taken place. The hon. Member for Radnor had argued that if the Church were disestablished no harm would be done, and the people of Wales would suffer no loss of their privileges. He had also said, that in one village there were 13 chapels. There was no doubt about the chapels; the chapels had been overbuilt on the assumption that the Church was going to remain in a lethargic condition, but that condition had disappeared. Then there was the question of the resident ministers. Was the qualification for a resident minister merely that he should preach a sermon on Sunday? He ventured to think that was not enough, and that resident ministers should minister both to the bodies and minds of the people. The dissenting ministers in these villages only ministered to the dissenters. There were many places which would be likely to lose their ministers if by this Bill the Church were Disestablished. It had been said, that the people of Wales would get very material advantages from the Bill; he ventured to think they would get very material disadvantages. It had been shown that the Church of England in Wales subscribed the greater proportion of the subscriptions and donations to the Voluntary Schools and Hospitals in the Principality. That was because their purses were released from the primary expenses of their churches. If, however, these endowments were spent on all the fanciful schemes which had been proposed, the churches would be obliged to devote their money to their own maintenance. He did not pretend to any special knowledge of Wales, but he was perfectly justified, as a member of the Church of England, in putting forward his views. Welsh Members knew perfectly well that in the main the clergymen of the Church of England in Wales were an influence for good, but that influence would, in his opinion, be lost in many of the poorer parts of Wales if this Bill became law. The hon. Member for Radnor had said that the English Church in Wales raised £250,000, while the Welsh dissenters raised £400,000. He should have liked to know how much of that £400,000 was spent merely on the interest of the debts on the dissenting chapels. But apart from that, hon. Members could not have it both ways. These figures showed that either the church was in a miserable minority, but was doing its duty munificently and splendidly, or else the supporters of the Church of England in Wales formed a very material part of the community. This was a sample of the arguments advanced by the supporters of the Bill, who did not, he thought, show a proper spirit of fairness in approaching this question. He was grateful to hon. Members for the courtesy with which they had listened to his views, which he had felt bound to express, because he did not think the Church of England in Wales had been justly treated.

*SIR R. E. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, he rose to take part in the Debate with a feeling of considerable regret. He thought hon. and right hon. Members on that side of the House had serious cause of complaint with regard to the way in which the Debate had been conducted on behalf of the Government. There had been, at any rate since last Monday night, a conspiracy of silence on this question, undoubtedly by direction of the Government. It was unworthy of them. Hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House, having honestly and fully put forward their views and arguments on the question, reasonably felt that they were entitled to some reply from the Front Bench. [The SOLICITOR-GENERAL: "It is the First Reading."] He would deal with that point in a moment. One of the ablest speeches ever heard in that House had been delivered on the question by the right hon. Member for Bristol, and it was scant courtesy to one in his position that absolutely no answer had been made from the Treasury Bench to that speech, though it was delivered early on Monday evening. As to the interlocutory observation just now of the Solicitor General, he must say that he felt it his duty to protest against the way in which the Home Secretary endeavoured to discount everything that was said on the matter by hon. Members on the Opposition side, in debating the First Reading of the Bill, by telling them beforehand, with scarcely veiled contempt in his tone, that what they were going to do was to be regarded as another instance of the growing abuse of making a First Reading the occasion for a Second Reading Debate. Before the right hon. Gentleman thought fit by anticipation to rebuke his opponents in this way, he might have been a little more careful to ascertain what was the Parliamentary practice on such occasions. From his own experience of that practice, which was at least as long as that of the right hon. Gentleman, and from careful reading, he could assert that on no single occasion had any Bill of a similar kind, and of equal importance, ever been introduced without the policy of the Government who brought in the Bill being explained to justify their action. It was all very well for the right hon. Gentleman to assume, in his peculiar manner, that the course taken by hon. Members of the Opposition was to be regarded as, to a certain extent, obstructing the course of events, because they insisted on examining the policy of the Government. On not one of the three occasions that the question of the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales had been brought before the House had the policy of the Government been explained, not even in the most casual manner. Was that in accordance with Parliamentary precedent? He challenged anyone of experience sitting on the Treasury Bench to justify that position. Was there anyone who had more respected or regarded the traditions of that House than the right hon. gentleman the Member for Midlothian? What was his utterance? And to this he would claim the attention of the Home Secretary, when he thought fit to suggest that there was no necessity for him to discuss the policy of the Government in connaction with this proposed enormous constitutional change.

The right hon Member for Midlothian said in 1869 :—

> "I cannot but be aware that under ordinary circumstances anyone who undertakes to introduce into the House of Commons a subject of grave constitutional change ought to commence by laying his ground strongly and broadly in historical and political reasons."

The Home Secretary would observe also that, notwithstanding the extent to which the question had previously been debated, the right hon. Member for Midlothian occupied a considerable portion of his three-hour speech on introducing the fundamental change with regard to the Disestablishment of the Irish Church in laying before the House the reasons which prompted the then Government in the action they took. The same course had been pursued on every occasion when a similar change to that now proposed had been brought forward. The Home Secretary no doubt remembered the Introduction of the Land Bill in 1870, when again three quarters of an hour, or an hour, was occupied by the right hon. Member for Midlothian in expounding the grounds for that change of policy. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman, too, of what his own Leader said, when dealing with the introduction of the Crimes Bill in 1882—a Bill which had not infrequently been discussed in that House. The right hon. Gentleman said :—

> "I shall best discharge the duty I have to perform if I endeavour to lay before the House the nature of the evils with which we have to deal, and the remedies which the Government are prepared to recommend for those evils."

Was this not an occasion, then, to inquire into the motives which have prompted the Government to introduce a measure disestablishing and disendowing the oldest institution in the country? The Church was older than the Monarchy, and was more closely interwoven with their rights and privileges, moral and social, than any other institution that existed. He would endeavour to show presently why the Home Secretary had not been able to discuss the policy, and it would be remarkable, unless some Member of the Government rose and spoke after him, that that Debate would have opened and closed without the slightest exposition of the policy of the Government in bringing this question forward being placed before the country. Ay or no—Was this an important occasion? Were right hon. Gentlemen entitled to treat the Church in Wales as though it were an isolated Church which had nothing to do with the Church as established in England? There was no statesman who had considered the question during the last 40 years who had not seen that in talking of the Church in Wales they were also talking of the Church in England, and that the question of the Church in England was vitally involved in all considerations affecting the Church in Wales. Geographically, historically, and spiritually the Church in Wales could not be distinguished from the other parts of the Province of Canterbury. It had no independent existence, it had no organic unity, apart from the Church of England; and those who dealt with the matter must be prepared to recognise that fact on the floor of the House, not on platforms of the country, where vapouring speeches could be made without the slightest probability of a reply. Was he justified in stating that the Church of England was involved in this question? It was not pleasure to quote from the speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but in this matter it was important to know whether the right hon. Gentleman had changed his opinion that the Church in England and the Church in Wales were practically the same organisation. As recently as 1886 the right hon. Gentleman, on a Motion for Disestablishment brought forward by the late Mr. Dillwyn, said :—

> "The Church of England in Wales is so much an intregal part of the Established Church of England that it is not merely difficult, but I will say impossible, to raise the question as a separate one, and that you cannot deal with the one question—I do not mean by Resolution, but practically in Legislation without involving the other. I think it is a proposition which will commend itself to every man's mind that if you raise the question of the Church in Wales you raise the whole question."

They had a ridiculous protest from the Home Secretary against what he called the abuse of turning the discussion into a Second Reading Debate. Where was his justification on the ground of policy, assuming the language of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to be even to a small extent correct? Had they heard from the Government Bench a single word in favour of Disestablishment of the Church in England as distinguished from the Church in Wales? No, they were in this position—that the Government were driven by the force of circumstances to admit that the attack was not one levelled solely against the Church in Wales, but levelled also against the Church in England. They knew that the battle whenever it came would be used as a strong argument in favour of or against the Disestablishment of the Church in England, but they had not been able to bring forward a single argument in favour of the great scheme they had undertaken. He meant on behalf of his friends and himself to put his protest on record and to make it clear that the Home Secretary could not possibly argue the question of policy in that House. If he did so he would have to deal with the question of an alien Church, and if he lent himself to the absurd suggestion that the Church in Wales was forced on an unwilling country by a conquering England he would have to get rid of the historic fact that the four dioceses of Wales had existed for centuries before Wales was conquered by England. Should the right hon. Gentleman attempt to put any other construction upon the word "alien" he asserted that, except from the point of view that there were a certain number of representatives from Wales asking for Disestablishment, no reasonable man would call the Church in Wales an alien Church. ["Oh!"] He would like to hear the arguments of those who shouted "Oh!" The right hon. Baronet the Member for Denbighshire when he referred the House to the testimony of a large number of ecclesiastics, should have told the House that he was referring to some number, less than ten, of Welsh clergymen, who were supposed to have declared against a National Church. But the Home Secretary was in another difficulty. Every lawyer and historian who had examined the question, had come independently to the conclusion that there was not the slightest ground for suggesting that the property of the Church did not belong to the Church, in the same way as the property of every private institution belonged to that institution. And the right hon. Gentleman would have had to make up his mind what case he should present to the House with regard to the property which was to be taken from the Church. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would redeem his promise, and argue these questions in the House, though they were questions that arose on the introduction of the Bill, and not on the Second Reading. The right hon. Gentleman was hampered by the promises of the Prime Minister; but the Prime Minister had used expressions for which it was difficult to find justification. The Prime Minister made a speech on March 12 last year, in which he stated that there was a unanimous feeling in favour of the removal of this branch of the Church of England, which was alien to the country, and doing more harm than good to the cause of religion. Who was the slanderer who suggested to him that the Church in Wales was doing harm? Was there a man who valued his word, who would there and then get up and say that the Church had been doing harm to religion? Because, such statements, made on the floor of that House, must be justified by facts. For the last two years he had studied this question closely, and was prepared to assert that anyone acquainted with the facts could not say that injury had been done to the cause of religion by the existence, the growing activity, and the increasing earnestness, of the Welsh Church. The right hon. Gentleman had exercised a wise discretion in declining to justify the policy of Her Majesty's Government, for he would have been involved in difficulties which even his own Party would have made it almost impossible for him to overcome. But there was one argument, and one argument only, which ran through the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman whenever he ventured to approach the question, and the only vestige of an argument which pointed to the question of policy was, that every objection that could be urged against the Welsh Bill had been used before against the Irish Bill, and had then been settled by the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Was there any justification for such a statement? Would the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, who was such an accurate historian, attempt to justify such a statement, for no doubt he had studied the speeches of 1869? The distinction between the Churches of Ireland and Wales was over and over again pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian; and the reason which was given for Disestablishing the Irish Church was because she did not fulfil those functions which the Church of England did towards the persons whose interest she had at heart. He thought that some powerful arguments in support of the Welsh Church could be found in the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, and however much they might have differed with that right hon. Gentleman, they were satisfied that the utterances he made with respect to the Welsh Church were utterances of conviction and founded upon his personal knowledge of the history of the Church. He said of the Irish Church that it was doing, and only hoping to do, the work of the few; he said of the Welsh Church that it was doing much, with the hope and prospect of doing more. The right hon. Gentleman also said that the Irish Church was severed from the affections of the people; that the Welsh Church was a broad and loving way to the hearts of the people; and, again, the language of the right hon. Member, speaking of the Irish Church, was that 4-5ths of the people supported Roman Catholicism over Protestantism, while in Wales there was constant interchange between the Established Church and the Nonconformist bodies; and that the Established Church was the Mother Church, out of which had sprung the whole of the religious life in that part of the country. He should not have quoted the language of the right hon. Gentleman if he had not satisfied himself that his inferences and conclusions were accurate, and he wished to know whether hon. Members from Wales would be pleased to dispute such statements, founded as they were upon the deliberate opinion of one whose long experience entitled him to their respect. There was one other general argument which had not been referred to in the course of the Debate. Some hon. Members had spoken of the Church as though it had been opposed to the national sentiment, but had the Welsh language done much or little to keep up the spirit of nationality in Wales? It had done a great deal, but he wondered how many of the representatives of Wales were able to speak their own language. If his statement were not correct there would be an opportunity of correcting it between this and the Second Reading of the Bill; but he thought he was safe in saying that only 18 out of the 33 representatives of Wales were able to carry on a conversation in the Welsh tongue. Could hon. Members from Wales deny that the preservation of the Welsh language had been due in a considerable degree to the Church? The Church, in fact, had preserved the Welsh language, and there was no one who looked into the subject who could contradict that. The Church for centuries preserved the Welsh language. They knew as well as he did the names of Davis and Morgan, two Welsh Bishops. Then had the Church done nothing for the national education of the Welsh people? Did the Welsh Members refer to these facts? Not at all. They preferred to observe a judicious silence on these questions. He advised hon. Members to consult the reports of the Charity Commissioners from 1843 to 1881. It was through the Welsh Endowed Schools that the Welsh language was taught. Was that a work directed towards the preservation of the national life of Wales, or was it not? He was quoting simply from his own reading, and he asserted that these facts pointed to the irresistible conclusion that the Church had not only done a great deal to preserve the Welsh language in its purest form, but had, by private education, brought to the front many eminent Welshmen. Not only that, the Church had brought back those eisteddfods for which Wales was well known. So far, therefore, from the Church being an enemy of the national life of Wales it was by that Church that the national aspirations had been fostered. Yes; that was so. Their complaint was that they had not discussed the subject and could not discuss it. They were asked to accept the Bill at the dictation of the Government because, forsooth, the Parliamentary representation of Wales was in favour of it. How far was that question of Parliamentary representation to be carried? They had London, with 4,000,000, against Wales, with 1,500,000. [An hon. MEMBER: "750,000."] 1,750,000 by all means. It was the first time that the hon. Members opposite had been able to correct him in a statement of fact. He asked what was the

Sir R. E. Webster.

population of London? Would the representation of London be any justification, any argument, for the Disestablishment of the Church in London? Establishments were not to be blown down or put up again by the dictates of Members of Parliament. No. Let Ministers justify their policy on the ground of morality, but do not let them come forward and say that it was necessary to obey the behests of a certain number of Members, and that if they did not obey those behests they could not remain in power. This question had assumed a position which he never expected it would assume from the extraordinary utterances of the Prime Minister, who, going down to Cardiff, felt it to be necessary to speak on the question of Disestablishment. The language of the Prime Minister was the most extraordinary that could have come from one in his position. He said:—

> "If it is really the national wish to recognise religion in the shape of an establishment, there is nothing absolutely immoral in the carrying out of that wish."

Had the discussion fallen so low as this, that a Church which had existed upwards of a thousand years, which had unquestionably done a great work in the past in the building up and fostering of the religious life of the nation, that had been the handmaid of all good work, was to be spoken of as something not absolutely immoral if you allowed it to remain established? It was extraordinary, in the face of these allegations respecting the policy of Her Majesty's Government, they should have had nothing from the Government as to the standpoint which the Prime Minister had taken up with regard to the duty of the Government. He had dealt as clearly as could be with this question of policy, because he was convinced no greater question was ever brought before the House of Commons. Whether the Opposition was right or wrong, whether the question was to be regarded as one which ought to be decided with reference to the Church in Wales or with reference to the Church in England, he was satisfied that it was, and is, incumbent on the House of Commons to have from her Majesty's Ministers a clear exposition of the policy which led them to propose this change; they ought not to allow their action to be dictated by hon. Members below the gangway, or her Majesty's Ministers to shelter themselves behind the opinions of Members from Wales, who had forced this question upon them. The Home Secretary had indicated that he was abusing the practice of the House by discussing the question of the policy of the measure on the First Reading; but he respectfully differed from the right hon. Gentleman, and believed, from precedent and experience, that his own was the truer Parliamentary position. No doubt he should transgress if he were to discuss details; but there were certain broad questions that demanded consideration at this stage. First, he entered a protest against the monstrous proposal as to the distribution of these Church funds. On what ground did the right hon. Gentleman abandon the idea of accumulating money or sav-ing it as a central fund out of which national purposes might be met? The right hon. Member for West Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) disposed of the argument that the Irish Church Fund had heen swamped, and he showed that, so far from its being so, a large part of the capital still existed, although it had been applied to objects of public importance and utility. The course now proposed was to hand over local property as a bribe to local authorities. The question raised with reference to Tithes was disposed of in the speech of the Leader of the Opposition on the occasion of the introduction of the Bill last year; and he was surprised that the Home Secretary did not think it his duty to make some answer to the objections which the Leader of the Opposition had advanced. Was he aware that exactly the same objections applied to the manner of dealing with the glebes? It was proposed that the emoluments of the Church derived from glebe should be handed over for the benefit of the parish or district. He had not examined the question as fully as it required to be examined, but he had obtained some facts which were worthy of consideration. In North Wales there were 350 parishes; in 1887 there was a population of 200,645 without any glebe at all; in 20 others there was a population of 9,790 with 2,048 acres of glebe. Could anything be more ridiculous than that the parishes with 200,000 people should get no glebe at all and nothing representing the value of it? The House would surely pause before it allowed such a monstrous disposition of glebe to be passed. The non-creation of a central fund could not be justified on any ground of economy or proper application of the money, and it was essential that there should be a strong protest against this distribution of the money. Then were they not entitled to enter a protest against the way in which curates were to be treated? It was all very well to say, in the language of a lawyer, that they had looked for a freehold estate or office, did not find any such tenure, and could recognise no other. Was that the way in which men who had devoted their lives to religious work ought to be dealt with? If the Government justified their action on the ground that the same course was taken in respect of the Irish Church, why did they not also adopt the same course as was taken with the Irish curates? Were the Welsh curates less deserving? Had they not done their work as well? Was it not perfectly well known that hundreds of them had qualified for their duties by proficiency in the Welsh language, and that for many years Bishops had insisted in many districts in Wales that the curates should be competent to speak the Welsh language; yet, notwithstanding all this, these men were to be dismissed with absolutely no notice and no compensation. He also protested against the cathedrals being handed over to a body, no member of which need be a member of the Church of England. Did the Home Secretary know that the Cathedrals of St. David's, Bangor, and Landaff were also parish churches? What justification was there for these churches being handed over to a Commission when all other parish churches were left in the custody of the Ministers? Probably the justification for the scheme of the Government was to be found in the fact that these parish churches had been enriched by upwards of £100,000, the money of Churchmen, in the last 50 years—a circumstance which gave an indication of the way in which this question had been approached. He maintained that these cathedrals should be taken from the Church and treated as belonging to the nation in a sense different from that in which the other parish churches were treated. He refrained from dealing at that stage with the question of the burial grounds, but he failed to understand why the churchyards and burial grounds were to be severed from the church. If it was said that this action was due to the fact that the Welsh people desired to bury their dead with Nonconformist rites, he asserted that every statistic was against them. He thought it was a lamentable fact that the Bill of the right hon. Member for East Denbighshire had been a complete failure.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN said, he explained when he moved the Bill that it would be of very slight operation in Wales, because all the Dissenting chapels in Wales had their own burial grounds.

*SIR R. E. WEBSTER, in that case, asked what was the reason for handing over the churchyards under this Bill. In this circumstance, as revealed by the interruption of the right hon. Gentleman, the House had an indication of the spirit in which the question of the Welsh Church was being approached. Dealing next with the purposes provided in the Schedule of the Bill, he said that the Home Secretary stated that the purposes to which the Church funds were to be applied were as religious in their nature as those to which they had previously been applied. But whether this was the money of the Church or not, it was to be appropriated to purposes that were certainly secular as compared with those for which it was given. Labourers' dwellings and allotments! That was one of the purposes. Was it not perfectly obvious that a bribe was there? Labourers' cottages and allotments, which would have the direct effect of cheapening rents and lowering rates or relieving the poor landowner of the duty of providing proper cottages for the labourers. It was transparent, it was perfectly obvious, that this was an attempt, first to conciliate the Welsh Members and then to conciliate the constituencies behind them. He did not know what might be the feeling of the House with regard to the course to be taken on the First Reading of this Bill. For himself he thought that, having entered a firm and emphatic protest against the action of the Government, they would not be justified in forcing the Government to a Division, because it was admitted that it was the duty of the Government to lay before the House of Commons the measures indicated in the Queen's Speech. But it must not be suggested that the Opposition were reconciled in the slightest degree either to the principles or provisions of this Bill. The Home Secretary had said that some day or other, at the time, he was pleased to say, was the proper time, he was going to argue the question of policy and give the House the reasons why Her Majesty's Government had introduced this measure. The House would then have an opportunity of answering the right hon. Gentleman, a better opportunity than they had at present, because they would then know the details of the measure of which they were now ignorant. He declined to take any part or lot in discussing the details of the measure, except subject to the protest which he now solemnly entered against the scheme for disestablishing this part of the Church. He declined to join in enfeebling an institution which had for centuries been the guiding light of religious education; he declined to appropriate to selfish and secular purposes property which had for centuries been devoted to religious work, he might say to God; he declined to take part in that which he believed to be a purely political agitation, without any foundation of justice or equity to support it, and would to a large extent destroy those springs of morality, religion, and truth which had, through the Church, existed for centuries.

MR. ABEL THOMAS wished, with the leave of the House, to make a personal explanation. His hon. and learned Friend earlier in the evening had called his attention to something he had said in correction of the hon. Member for Tunbridge. He found that the hon. Gentleman was right and he was himself wrong. The hon. Member had said that the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists in Wales numbered 267,000, and he had corrected him and said that they numbered 292,000. His mistake was that he had taken the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists in England as well as in Wales. The hon. Member for Tunbridge was right and he was wrong, and therefore he thought he ought to mention the matter to the House.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said, he would be very sorry if it were supposed by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, or any one who opposed the Bill, that the silence observed on the Treasury Bench since his right hon. Friend had introduced the measure, had been due to any want of respect for the arguments addressed to the House, to many, indeed to all, of which they had listened with attention. The reason of the Government was that, having, as they conceived, sufficiently stated the general ground of the policy on which they introduced the Bill, and also stated the details of the scheme, they thought it better that their fuller arguments of policy should be reserved for the usual stage of Second Reading, and that the justification of the particular measure should be reserved partly for that stage and partly for the Committee stage. He must enter his protest against the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member that his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary treated this matter or the feelings of those opposed to the Bill with indifference in making a comparatively short statement as to the scope and ground of the Bill. What were the facts? This was no new matter. The hon. and learned Member referred to previous occasions in the last Parliament when this matter was before the House. Everyone would remember the speech of the right hon. Member for Midlothian in which he explained with great force the reasons which had convinced him that the views which he had formerly held with regard to the Established Church in Wales could no longer be maintained. Even in the present Parliament the subject was now being debated for the third time. In 1893 the Home Secretary introduced the Suspensory Bill in a long speech, and last year, in introducing the measure then brought forward, he delivered a speech that occupied nearly two hours. In these circumstances the Government was perfectly justified in adopting the views that the House knew quite well what were the grounds of their policy. Hon. Members also knew that this discussion was merely the precursor of a larger Debate on the Second Reading, when the selfsame arguments would be adduced, and when the Government would be able to meet them with a greater fulness than was possible now. The hon. and learned Member who had just sat down said that the Church of England was vitally involved in this measure. That, in fact, had been the chorus note of the Front Opposition Bench. No right hon. or hon. Member, however, had pointed out any particular respect in which any clergyman or layman of the Church of England in any diocese in England would suffer. [Several Opposition MEMBERS—"Monmouth."] Monmouth, as hon. Members must know, was virtually part of Wales, and had been treated as part of Wales under statute: for example, Monmouth was included in Wales under the Intermediate Education Act. He was entitled to say, until the contrary should be proved, that the Church in England in her spiritualities and temporalities, in her ecclesiastical and spiritual life, remained untouched and unharmed by this Bill. Nor could it be alleged that the Bill was levelled against the Church of England. On the contrary, every argument which the Government had used in support of the measure had been an argument which was confined in its application to the case of Wales. What was the principal ground upon which the Home Secretary founded his Suspensory Bill of 1893? He founded it upon the demand of the Welsh people; upon the fact that there came from Wales a demand which was not made in England, and which was based upon grounds that did not exist in England. The hon. and learned Member might have quoted that significant passage in the speech of the right hon. Member for Midlothian in the Debate of 1891—the passage in which he declared that this question in Wales had attained the proportions of a national demand. No one who had watched the way in which the Welsh majorities in support of this policy had gone on increasing, and who realised how this one question covered the whole sky of Welsh politics, could doubt that the Welsh Members, in making this demand, were speaking the voice of the whole Welsh people. The hon. and learned Member compared the case of Wales with the case of London, and asked whether the opinions of the people of London or of Yorkshire were also to be taken as conclusive in matters of this kind. The hon. and learned Member said that if London or Yorkshire, through its representatives, were to make such a demand as this it would certainly be refused. But did not that point to the great difference between the position of Wales and that of any other part of the United Kingdom? The Welsh people were the remains of of the most ancient inhabitants of these islands. They were excluded from the rest of what was now England by the incoming of a foreign and heathen people. They were driven into the fastnesses of their western mountains, and there they preserved their national habits and customs, their language, poetry, and literature, and a character which was in many respects fundamentally different from that of the English people. It was not surprising that a people so circumstanced, by the misfortunes and oppressions to which they were at one time subjected, by the very poverty and hardships of their lot, cherished their own literature and national recollections; it was not unnatural that they should have followed the teachings of ministers who preached to them in a way which suited their character, their feelings, and their temper better than the ninisters of the Established Church; that they should have formed themselves into different religious communities, and should have been drawn away from that which he admitted was their original National Church. But they had been drawn away. He defied anyone who had studied their history, lived among them, and understood their character, genius, and temper, to ignore the fact that they were now for many purposes so entirely different from the population of any circumscription of England that they were entitled to be called a nation, and that no argument drawn from any equivalent circumscription of England was of any effect in reply to their national demand. Of course the facts of the Irish Church were in many respects different from those of Wales, but he would call attention to one remarkable point on which the two cases did agree, and that was in prophesyings and arguments. The prophecies of evils and the arguments used to show that Disestablishment in Ireland would be a wicked thing, spoliation and robbery, were exactly the same arguments as the House heard now. Then, as now, they were told it was sacrilege to lay hands on the property of the Church. But the House of Commons of that day did not yield to those arguments, nor even the House of Lords. The House of Lords, under the wiser guidance which it had in those days, yielded to the express will of the nation, and that Act, in spite of all the cries of plunder and spoliation, took its place upon the Statute Book, and everybody who knew the country would admit that Ireland had been better for that Act. [" Oh ! " *and cheers.*] It was said then that the Disestablishment of the Church of Ire- was the first nail in the coffin of the Church of England. Twenty-five years had passed since then, and would any hon. Member say that at this moment the Church of England was any weaker or any nearer to being disestablished, had any less stronghold on the affections of the people, than she had in 1869? The fact was, Disestablishment in each country must be judged, and ought to be judged, upon the circumstances of the country only, and the ground upon which Her Majesty's Government put this case was that there was in regard to Wales a national demand. They had not said a word about England, because they did not say there was a national demand in the case of England. Those hon. Members who appealed to the case of Ireland must feel that not one of the doleful prophecies foretold in 1869 had been fulfilled. It was said then that religion would not support itself, that Ireland would become a lawless country, and that it was only with State recognition that a nation retained the right to consider itself a God-fearing nation. Would anyone say that in Ireland religion had suffered since 1869? They knew, on the contrary, that the Protestant Episcopal Church in Ireland was in no respects weaker, but was in many respects stronger than she was in 1869. They knew that the ecclesiastical and spiritual life which freedom had stimulated among her members had been of the greatest possible service to her; and he would go further and say he thought there was no evidence whatever that the contributions which her members had made to various philanthropic objects since her Disestablishment in 1869 had been, considering the impoverishment of the country, land depression, and other difficulties, at all less than before Disestablishment. On the contrary, that which was to be expected had happened, and the stimulus which was given by Disestablishment and by throwing the Church upon the liberality of the believers who attended its ministrations had done good to the Church, and instead of weakening had strengthened it. He passed over several points in the speech of the hon. and learned Member as not calling for serious reply, and he came to one or two points in which criticism had been made upon particular parts of the Bill. It was said that they did not propose to deal with the case of curates in the same way as they were dealt with in Ireland. There were some examples to follow and some to avoid, and if ever there was an example to avoid it was the example of that provision for Irish curates under which such an extravagant amount of compensation was paid to persons, many of whom entered the ministry for the express purpose of getting compensation. He hoped they should not follow any such example. He was sincerely anxious that no curate should suffer, and he would venture to point out there was no reason to think there would be any substantially less demand for curates in the future than there had been in the past. His own belief was, that it would be found in 20 years that the parish churches in Wales would be quite as well endowed, and the ministers quite as well paid, as at this moment; and the very fact that the process they proposed to start was to be a gradual process, under which incumbents would retain their cures as long as they chose to do so, would prevent any sudden cessation of employment of curates. He did not see any reason to apprehend that the position of a curate would be substantially worse after this Bill passed than it was now. He was reminded that their plan for the Disestablishing Fund, was not the same as was followed in the case of Ireland, but he thought that the Irish plan was again an example to avoid. In the Irish case all the money was collected in one large central fund, which became a sort of mark at which everyone aimed an arrow; and, although a certain part of the fund had been still reserved in capital form for public purposes, a great deal had gone for purposes which could scarcely have been originally contemplated. He thought it would be a great pity if the fund in the case of the Welsh Church should be exposed to the constant attacks which were made on the Irish Church Fund. He would put it to the House whether it was not better that these emoluments, arising from tithes which had a purely local origin, should *prima facie* be spent and applied to the benefit of the place whence they came? That, he thought, was a principle which commended itself as having some reasonable and historical justification. It would be open to the House at any future time to capitalise the fund. The Government thought it better that, in starting, the money should be spent where it arose, and subject to proper provisions for enabling money in some cases to be spent over the area of a county instead of in one place, where it might not be so largely needed. It was alleged that the purposes contemplated were secular purposes. The Irish Church money was spent on equally secular purposes, and he claimed the Irish Church case as a Parliamentary precedent. What Parliament did in 1869 it might do in 1895; and that which Parliament thought was no robbery or plunder 26 years ago was no robbery or plunder now. As to the cathedrals, some hon. Members seemed to suppose that the cathedrals were going to be withdrawn in some way from what he might call the Unestablished Church of the future. Nothing of the kind was proposed. The Bill proposed to vest the cathedrals in the Welsh Commissioners, and the obligation and duty was laid on those Commissioners of allowing the cathedrals to be used, as heretofore, for the public worship of what would be the Protestant Episcopalian Church of Wales. He could not see what there was to complain of in that. In addition a fund would be placed at the disposal of the Commissioners out of which they would keep the fabrics in repair, the duty being imposed upon them of keeping the fabrics in proper repair. He could not refrain from referring to the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol made upon what he called this piecemeal method of Disendowment. Objection might be taken to any method adopted in a large and difficult enterprise of this kind, but the Government hoped to be able to convince the House that, on the whole, the advantages of what the right hon. Gentleman called a piecemeal method—that was to say, of letting the incumbent retain a vested interest for his life and discharge his duties—were greater than those of the course followed in the case of the Irish Church. As to discipline, it would be found that the Bill made ample provision for the maintenance of the discipline of the Disestablished Church. He could not conclude without making a few observations upon the reference which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol made to some remarks of his upon the Reformation in England. Nobody who had followed even in outline the history of the 16th century would say there was a pulling down of one Church and the setting up of another, and he had never thought of conveying any such view. [An hon. MEMBER "Lord Rosebery did."] Nor did Lord Rosebery. He had the pleasure of listening to Lord Rosebery at Cardiff, and he asserted with confidence that no such interpretation could be put on the word of the Prime Minister. Everyone knew that the legal and historical continuity of what was called the Roman Catholic Church and of the Protestant Church was complete. The argument was that the changes which were made at the epoch before the Reformation were so great, consisting in a complete change of doctrine, in the ejection of a great many ministers and bishops, in compelling the supremacy of the Sovereign instead of the Pope to be accepted, of the passing of statutes which they all regarded as intolerable and harsh and which completely revolutionized the religious condition of England, that the dealing with endowments was a matter of far greater importance than anything that was being attempted now. He was much surprised to find that so many hon. Members had spoken as if in this matter the Government were dealing with the life of the Church in Wales. The noble Lord the Member for Edinburgh, for instance, spoke throughout as if he thought the life and being of the Welsh Church was at stake; he spoke of them putting an end to an institution which had 1,300 years of life in hand. They were going to change a Church that had hitherto been Established, into a Disestablished Church. That was to say, they were going to put that Church into the same position in which many of the most prosperous Christian Churches of the world were at this moment. How could it be suggested that that was putting an end to the Church? How could it be suggested that the life of a Church which had lasted 300 years was threatened by a change of that kind? Did any one say that the Protestant Episcopalian Church of Ireland had suffered by being Disestablished in 1869; or that the Protestant Episcopalian Church of America, which was a growing and flourishing Church, had suffered by being disestablished more than 100 years ago? Did any one say that the spiritual life of the Protestant Episcopalian Church of the Colonies came to an end when that Church was disestablished? He could not express the astonishment he felt that hon. Members like the noble Lord, who were so devoted to the Church, who had such faith in the power of the Church and in her spiritual claim and title, should be able to regard for a moment with alarm and despondency the change contemplated by the Bill. It was with no such feelings that the Government introduced the Bill, They should not have brought forward the Bill; and he could not be a party to it, if he did not believe that 20 years hence every member of the Protestant Church in Wales would thank the Government for the Bill; and that the Church in Wales would have a career far brighter, far purer, and far more useful than she had at this moment.

MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, the noble Lord the Member for West Edinburgh never said, and never intended to say, that the spiritual life of the Church could be done away with by any Act of Parliament.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Bryce, and Mr. Solicitor General.

ESTABLISHED CHURCH (WALES) BILL.

Bill to terminate the Establishment of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and to make provision in respect of the Temporalities thereof.

Presented accordingly and read 1°. To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 144.]

*SIR M. E. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman give us any idea as to the period which must necessarily be allowed to elapse before the Bill is placed on the Paper with a view to taking the Second Reading?

MR. ASQUITH: Certainly not for a fortnight.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH asked what business the Government proposed to take on Friday and Monday?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-on-Tyne): To-morrow we propose to take two or three non-contentious but useful Bills—the Factory Bill, the Truck Bill, the Conciliation in Trades Disputes Bill, and the Scotch County Government Bill; and on Monday I hope to introduce the Irish Land Bill.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee;

Sir Julian Goldsmid in the Chair.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 3:—

And, it being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress—

Resolved,—That this House will immediately resolve itself into Committee on the Bill.

Bill further considered in Committee—

Question again proposed, "That Clause 3 stand part of the Bill."

The House went into Committee on the above Bill.

Sir Julian Goldsmid in the Chair.

Clause 6.

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.), said the Chief Secretary had promised to consider the question of the time to be allowed to the Guardians, and to the occupiers to whom advances would be made by the Guardians, for the repayment of the advances. The loan was to be repaid by two equal instalments—the first to be paid on August 1 of next year, and the second on August 1, 1897; so that, so far as the Guardians were concerned, there was a period of two years allowed. Clause 6 provided for the repayment by the occupier to the Boards of Guardians, in two instalments, and payable when the first ordinary rate was struck after 1st July in the present year and the following year. That rate was usually struck in August or September.

It being now Twelve of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair, and the House resumed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) moved, "That the House do resolve itself into Committee on the Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Bill."

Motion agreed to.

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) resuming, said, that the repayment would become due before the occupiers had realised the value of the property. Any occupier would be liable to be pressed for the payment of his first instalment by the Boards of Guardians in the August of this year; and for his second instalment in August of next year, so that his assured period of repayment was only 1½ not 2 years. Owing to the prevalent high prices, the payment of the instalments would consume half the crop in each year, and this would be a great hardship and oppression to the small occupiers. He had recently been among the people of Kerry, and they had urged him to beg for some extension of the Bill in this respect. He proposed to alter "2" to "3," so as to make the loans repayable in three equal instalments. He knew that a subsequent clause allowed the Lord Lieutenant to give a term of grace to any particular Board or occupier. But that proposal would be very cumbersome, and it might not meet cases of great need. This was only a small matter as far as the Government were concerned.

Mr. J. MORLEY explained that he did not think the hardship anticipated would arise, and, having consulted those who had had experience on former occasions, he regretted that he must adhere to the provision in the Bill.

*SIR M. E. HICKS-BEACH concurred in the decision of the Chief Secretary, but hoped that, after the facilities that had been given for Government business, the consideration of the matter would be postponed if there was to be any further discussion on it.

MR. T. SEXTON rose to express his regret at the decision of the Chief Secretary, but cries of "Progress" were raised on the Conservative benches.

Progress then reported.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889.

*MR. J. W. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire) moved—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her Assent to Ordinance No. 57 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, until it be revised, by leaving out Section (xii.) of the Ordinance."

He apologised to the House for detaining them at that late hour, but his object was to remove from the perpetuation of an Act of Parliament matters which he thought were small enough to be safely entrusted to Local Authorities like the Universities themselves. The Ordinance to which he took exception applied to all the four Universities of Scotland, but it applied to the Aberdeen University in an extraordinary degree. This Ordinance dealt with the subject of Bursaries. A Bursary was a Scholarship, which was gained on entering a University and held by students during their University career; and in the University of Aberdeen, it would be no great exaggeration to say, that there were almost as many Bursaries as students. So nearly, at all events, was this the case that every student who went up to the University had a reasonable hope of winning a Bursary. A consequence of the Bursary system was, that the subjects which paid at the Bursary Examination were exclusively those taught at all the training schools that fed the Universities. The Bursary Examination not only reflected its shadow backwards on all the schools, but forwards on the University curriculum. By Ordinance No. 11 no student could take any language for his degree which he had not passed in at his Entrance Examination, and in Aberdeen the Entrance Examination was synonymous with the Bursary Examinations. Whatever subjects were laid down for the Bursary competition would be the subjects that would regulate the secondary education of the district, and would influence the University curriculum itself. The part of the Ordinance to which he took exception indicated what those subjects were to be. The Commissioners had laid down that no student should select more than five of those subjects, which were placed under two categories —compulsory and optional. The compulsory subjects were English, Latin, and Mathematics; and the optional were Greek, French, German, Italian, and Dynamics. It was strange that science should be represented in the list by one subject only, and that subject Dynamics. For the compulsory subjects double marks (400) were given, and for all the optional subjects, except one, 200 marks —the exception being Greek, and for that subject 400 marks were given. How would this work out? Take two students, a boy and a girl, going into the competition; the boy taking Greek, and the girl Modern Languages as special subjects. Each of them would get 1,200 marks for the compulsory subjects. The girl would get 400 more for French and German, making 1,600 marks altogether, the total she was allowed to get. The boy took Greek, and with an extra subject, say Dynamics, which he was allowed to take, could thus bring his marks up to 1,800. Now, for one student to compete with the possibility of making 1,600 marks only, while another student had the possibility of making 1,800, meant the difference between a Bursary and no Bursary at all. The effect of the Ordinance would be to prohibit students in some cases from entering the Universities. Moreover, the consequence of the system would be that, while Greek and Latin would be favoured by students for the Bursary competition, French and German would be neglected in the schools and in the University curriculum. That was a state of matters of which the people of Aberdeen made serious complaint. He wondered how the Commissioners proposed to justify it. He believed the principle on which they based their action was, that Greek was twice as difficult to learn as French or German, and therefore double marks were given for it. But was the Greek paper at the Bursary competition twice as difficult as the French or German paper? He might show by statistics that such was not the fact, but his case was strong enough without doing so. Even granting that Greek was twice as difficult to learn as French or German, the fact would not touch his argument. If there is anything in the argument at all about Greek being double as difficult as French or German, it would cut the other way. If it is true that it took a man double the time to learn Greek that he would spend in acquiring French, why did they allow him to take up, in addition to this difficult subject, an extra subject and bring the marks up to 1,800. Now, another argument was this: They said that they were defending the poor against the rich. They said that the rich man's son could go to France and Germany and learn those languages there. Well, he was pleased to say that it was a well known tradition in the University of Aberdeen, that when a rich man got a Bursary he passed it by and handed it down to his poor neighbour. But was it a fact that going to France or Germany to learn those languages was an advantage? Why, they were answered over and over again that the reverse was the case, and it stood to common sense. He knew that from his own experience, a man might, by that means, obtain greater colloquial capacity, but if he had to pass an examination as to grammar, syntax, and literature, it would be altogether different. As to those things, a man would do better to stop at home. It was also contended that this ordinance took a great step forward, and that it was a great improvement. He contended that that was not the case. He did not ask them to accept his humble authority, but he quoted Professor Ramsay in favour of the view he took. Hon. Members might imagine, and he had been told that he was there to champion modern languages. But that was not so. He was there for the purpose of championing the cause of his University against a measure which would be seriously deleterious to it. Public opinion was gradually setting against the compulsory enforcement of Latin and Greek in our University courses, and the shrinking in the number of Art Students in the Scottish Universities could only be attributed to the fact that they went to other places where the study of the dead languages was not forced upon them. He regretted the position which the Commissioners had taken up in regard to this matter, but who was going to support them in the House on that occasion? Two of those Commissioners sat in the House; and it seemed to him that the only support they would receive would be from quarters which were not exactly progressive in their views. He had been blamed for bringing the matter before the House of Commons, but the University for which he was speaking had done everything within their power before taking this final step. They had petitioned in the sense of his Amendment, but the Commissioners had taken no notice whatever. True, other Universities had not moved in the matter, but then it did not affect them to the same extent. A University which had few or no competitive Bursaries could afford to sit easily under the ordinance. *Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.* An appeal to the Privy Council had been suggested, but they had had enough of appealing to the Privy Council, and preferred coming to the House of Commons, a step which was deemed necessary in the interests of an institution which would be seriously endangered by the enforcement of the ordinance of which he had to complain.

*MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) said, the hon. Member had done ample justice, both in the matter of argument and of rhetoric, to the cause which he advocated. He rose to answer him because he happened to be a Member of the Bursary Committee of the Commission. He regretted the absence of his two colleagues, the hon. Member for the University of Glasgow and Aberdeen, and the hon. Member for Ipswich. He was authorised by them to state in the strongest language their concurrence with the Ordinance which had been passed unanimously by the Commission, and their opposition to the present Motion. That Motion was a little unusual in form, for it asked that the Commission should revise the Ordinance. They had no power under the Act to revise the Ordinance; all that could be done was to move Her Majesty to withhold her Assent to it. The question, however, had been raised clearly enough by the speech of the hon Member. It had been represented by him that the action of the Commission had been to give an undue preference to the study of Greek over Modern Languages, and to do so contrary to the customs and requirements of Aberdeen University. When the Commissioners undertook the duties laid upon them they found Greek an indispensable requisite to obtaining the degree of Master of Arts. The Commissioners found that Modern Languages had no place whatever in the obtaining of a degree; and they placed Greek as an optional subject and Modern Languages as optional too. They found the Bursaries in precisely the same situation, that is, that Greek was a necessary and compulsory subject to obtain a Bursary at all; indeed it was still a compulsory subject; and it was by the free action of the Commission that Greek would no longer be a compulsory subject in University competitions and for graduation. It was true that, in introducing Modern Languages as voluntary subjects, they had thought it necessary to secure that Greek and Modern Languages should be taken at their proper relative values, and it was their action in that respect that was called in question. The hon. Member seemed to think that if you included Modern Languages you must make them take as good a position as any other subject; but that was an untenable and an extravagant proposition. It had never been done in any similar case, such for instance as the Indian Civil Service Examination, in which there was great variation in the numbers of marks for different subjects. A still nearer illustration was afforded by two munificent bequests which had done much to foster education in Aberdeen and the adjacent counties; and under these bequests £2 per student was given for the teaching of Greek and Latin and £1 for German and French. Yet the Commissioners were told they were interfering with the needs and arrangements of Aberdeen University. It was one of the most important and difficult parts of their work to regulate the relations between the Schools and the University. It was their duty to see that, while they admitted what an American witness called "soft" subjects into the curriculum of the University, the "soft" subjects did not drive out the hard subjects, and that due value should be assigned to one and to the other so as to make them effectively and substantially equal. More than that they had not done. He need not assure the House that, in seeing this equal justice done, they had no prejudice against the modern side of education, which was well represented in the Commission. They had the President of the Royal Society, and the hon. Member for South Manchester (Sir H. Roscoe), a distinguished man of science. To a certain extent, also, the Commissioners had the guidance of a Commission of Inquiry of 1878, also consisting of eminent men, who had recommended that the door should be opened to every form of intellectual culture. The Commissioners had adopted that principle, and all they had done in the matter of Bursaries was to guard it by the condition which he had mentioned. The hon. Member said that a lad could not proceed to graduation unless he had passed a preliminary examination in one of the subjects, but it should not be forgotten that the lad might take the preliminary examination at any time. It was further said that the Commissioners ought to have left this matter to the discretion of the Senatus. But the Commissioners felt it to be their duty when they opened these avenues to those easier subjects, also to take precautions that that liberty should not result in the entire extinction of studies in the higher literature in the Scottish Universities. Reference had been made to the Universities Committee of the Privy Council; and he could not help asking, why did not the hon. Member and his friends avail themselves of the appeal to the Universities Committee of the Privy Council, which was conferred by the Act. His hon. Friend was not accurate in saying that the University authorities in Aberdeen petitioned. They only exercised the statutory right to lodge objections to this statute before it was passed by the Commissioners as an Ordinance. The Aberdeen authorities only lodged one objection; they claimed for themselves the liberty to deal with this matter at their own discretion. If they had stated any of the detailed objections mentioned that evening, those objections would have received the most respectful consideration; but they were not made. In their Ordinance the Commissioners had been much indebted to the suggestions of the different University bodies. No such objections as his hon. Friend had taken were laid before the Commissioners. The only thing the hon. Member and his friends did was to claim the right to regulate this thing for themselves and to that the Commissioners found themselves unable to agree. In conclusion, he wished to say that it was not possible to argue this case as it ought to be argued at that hour of the night. Moreover, the House of Commons was not the proper tribunal before which to bring the case. The Act of Parliament gave an Appellate Court which sat at midday and not at midnight, and which would, if required, go calmly and deliberately into the case. The hon. Gentleman and his friends had declined to avail themselves of that court, and had brought the matter before the House at a time when it could not be discussed. This was not a case in which the House of Commons could wisely or properly interfere with the discretion they had committed to the Commissioners. If the Commissioners had not opened the door as they had done to every kind of intellectual culture, it would have been very proper for the House of Commons to pronounce an opinion; but when they had done that, then the House had no right to interfere with them in a matter which, though to his hon. Friend it was a matter of detail, from the point of view of the Commissioners was vital. He begged the House to remember the constitution of this Commission. It was a Parliamentary Commission appointed by the House of Commons. It was not merely a Commission appointed by a Minister. Its composition was canvassed and even altered by the House, and accordingly the Commissioners were the servants of the House whom the House had charged with a particular duty which it could not undertake itself. They asked as public servants to receive the support they ought to receive, and he doubted not that they would receive that support. If objection had been taken in a question of large policy it might have been a different thing; but the Commissioners in the course of five years had woven a web for the reform of University Education in Scotland, and he asked the House not, suddenly in a quarter of an hour, to make a hole in it, and ask them to tear it up. He left the case in the hands of the House with the greatest confidence.

*MR. R. C. JEBB (Cambridge University) supported the Ordinance of the Commissioners. In the Bursaries concerned, those for students in the Faculty of Arts, the subjects of competition had hitherto been English, Latin, Greek, and Mathematics. The Commissioners had now made Greek optional, the alternatives being French, German, Italian, and Dynamics. This was a concession, but to it they attached the condition that Greek should carry twice as many marks as any of the other subjects. The reason for this condition was, that, as experience showed, the average student required a much longer time to reach that degree of proficiency which the Bursary examination tested in Greek and Latin, than to attain the corresponding point of proficiency in French and German. This was proved by statistics furnished to the Commission from secondary schools. A definite gauge was afforded by the Higher and Lower Leaving Certificates given by the Scotch Education Department. A boy on the classical side of a secondary school would not infrequently obtain a Higher Grade Certificate in French, when he could obtain only a Lower Grade Certificate in Latin, though he had been devoting far the larger part of his time to the ancient language. The right principle was that intellectual tests of equal difficulty should carry equal value. If unequal tests were to be given equal values, the result would not be a real equality, but only the delusive semblance of it. The Indian Civil Service Examination afforded a precedent for the action of the Commissioners. In that examination 2,300 marks could be obtained by classics (including Greek and Roman history), but only 1,000 marks by French and German. The reason against leaving the assignment of marks to be settled by the authorities of Scotch Universities themselves, was that the result would be perpetual uncertainty. A vote of the Senatus might at any time change the relative value of Bursary subjects. The whole system of secondary teaching would be deranged, because schoolmasters could feel no security as to the weight which would be given to different subjects from year to year. The adjustment of marks between the different subjects was not in this case a mere detail, but involved a principle, which ought to be fixed by Ordinance. Many things—as, for instance, the courses of study for the degree—were fixed by Ordinance in the case of the Scotch Universities, which in the case of Oxford and Cambridge were left to be settled by the Universities themselves. There was in this respect no real analogy between the Universities of Scotland and those of England. The Ordinance now impugned had received the unanimous sanction of the Commission. It was accepted by three out of the four Scotch Universities. If it was rejected, the work of the Commission as a whole would be injured in a vital part. The consequences would be far-reaching. Not only would Greek be soon killed out of Scotch education, but a fatal blow would be dealt to classical scholarship in Scotland generally, and to all the interests of that higher learning in which Scotland had been so long and so honourably distinguished.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, that everyone in that House recognised the great services of the Commissioners. They had given their time and labour, and sacrificed their own convenience to an extraordinary extent. The House was very grateful to them, and had proved its gratitude by passing without any controversy a very large number of the Ordinances which they had presented. He thought the House was bound to do that in the case of any Ordinance which was constructed and organic, and that the House had done. But he did not think the House was deprived of touching a question like this, which he certainly maintained lay on the surface, and was not organic, constructed as part of the main system of Scottish Universities. If the House was to cut out the words stating that in determining the marks to be assigned, the several subjects for bursary competition, Greek, Latin and Mathematics should be assigned to them double the marks assigned to other subjects, the Ordinance and the whole arrangement of the bursaries would yet remain perfectly operative, the machinery would be quite perfect and it would be left to the authorities of the different Universities to say what proportion of marks should be given to each subject. That was permitted to every and the smallest college in Oxford and Cambridge, and he was bound to say that the great Scottish Universities were perfectly competent to carry out the same duty. If the Commissioners had been deputed by Parliament to fix the marks for the bursaries examinations, then he quite agreed with the Member for Mid-Lanark they were bound to support them unless they had done something very extreme indeed. But if they were not so commissioned under the Act, they were justified in doing it by the Act, but were not bound to do it by the Act, and they in that House might form their own opinion about the matter. But to come to the question itself. What was the reason which his hon. Friend opposite gave—and he thought every one would allow he was a perfectly adequate exponent of the theory—for giving double marks to Greek and Latin that they did for French and German? The hon. Gentleman said that it took twice the time to attain a certain proficiency in Greek that it did for French and German, and that therefore it ought to have higher marks. But what was their answer to that? Their answer was that they should give the same marks to French and German as to Greek, but that in order to obtain the highest marks for French and German students should be obliged to attain a much higher efficiency than was required for Greek. That was the way to encourage French and German, but the method which had been adopted by the Commissioners did not so much encourage Greek as discourage French and German, because he observed that this was what was the case: that a student who really applied himself to French and German with energy and interest, who made himself an excellent French and German scholar and really enjoyed French and German literature, when he had come to that degree of perfection could only, after all, obtain a pitiful 200 marks. He wished hon. Members would recollect what they themselves were at the age these lads went in for the Bursaries. How was it possible for the great run of lads to get the only thing worth getting —a real intellectual education—out of one or two subjects, out of Greek and Latin? All the tendency of modern education had been to multiply the channels through which people could attain intellectual interest, and he ventured to say there was not in a great school of 500 or 600 boys more than five or six, or a dozen at most, who got a really genuine intellectual interest out of Greek. He did not think there were more than five or six or seven boys in a great school who really knew Greek, as he believed a great many hon. Members of the House knew French literature. If they multiplied the number of subjects, if they took natural science, a certain number of other boys got an intellectual education, and if they took modern history, and French and German, more boys still got intellectual education. But the necessary condition of getting that intellectual education, was that they should encourage excellence, and they could not encourage excellence by the system of giving half marks for subjects—the only result of that would be to discourage them. The Commissioners had done two very good things. They had done away with Greek as a compulsory subject in the ordinary degree examination, but they had greatly undone that by making Greek practically a compulsory subject in the bursary examination. And, again, the Commissioners had done themseves very great credit by admitting girls and women to compete for the Bursaries. But after all, what was the use of admitting girls to the bursaries if, at the same time, they put the girls under an immense disadvantage, because in the girls' schools of Scotland French and German were largely taught, but Greek was taught only, as it were, by a certain amount of special coaching. If a person took up Greek, he could get 1,800 marks, but if he did not take up Greek, he could only get 1,600 marks. The variation between the two figures made all the difference. Often the first-rate man would be beaten by the second-rate man. That certainly was the case in every final degree examination, the figures of which he had known. ("No no.") Yes; 200 marks would cover the difference between half a dozen men in the tripos; certainly it did in his tripos, and in that of many around him.

*MR. JEBB remarked that the right hon. gentleman was supposing an examination for a degree which followed a course of study at the University; whereas the competition for Bursaries at entrance could only test teaching at school.

Sir G. TREVELYAN said, he was speaking of a bursary examination. and every one knew what an important thing a bursary examination was. It was a serious thing to put in a position of incapacity and disadvantage two languages like French and German, the elements of which were quickly mastered, and from which intellectual enjoyment was soon derived. In this controversy then he felt that, as a Member of Parliament, he was bound to say, that he agreed with his hon. Friend behind him. But it was not a Party question, or a Government question, and every hon. Member would, no doubt, vote exactly according to the view he took of the matter.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square), said, the question was whether education in Scotland was to be determined by a vote of the House after three-quarters of an hour's debate, or by a Commission which had carefully examined into the matter, and by the authorities of the Scottish Universities themselves. On one side they had the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland and two hon. Members behind him, and against that they had the declared opinion of the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and St. Andrews. Aberdeen was alone in the matter. But he had had a letter from the Principal of Aberdeen University protesting against the course which had been taken by the Secretary for Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the advantages of French and German. No one could deny them. But the great vaunt which Scotland had over England in educational matters in the past was that the Scotch were better grounded in the Classics than the English. In Scotland a knowledge of Latin had gone far deeper into the population than in England; and it was at that system of education they proposed to strike a blow by this Motion. The crofter's son had been introduced. He believed the crofter's son would in many cases have better opportunities of learning Latin and Greek in Scotland than French and German; for German and French had not established themselves in Scotland as Greek and Latin had done. He appealed to the House not to disturb the deliberate judgment of those appointed to consider the matter, or to run counter to the wishes expressed by the heads of the Scottish Universities.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. J. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.) said, that he was bound to say one word on this question as the Representative of Aberdeen City, because his colleague was absent. The case of Aberdeen University was very different from that of the other three Scottish Universities. The bursaries at Aberdeen had a greater importance than elsewhere. He put it to the House that the mistake which the Commissioners had made was in legislating on the same lines for Aberdeen and the other three Universities. He wished to dissociate himself from any disparagement of Greek; and he did not altogether agree with his right hon. Friend (Sir G. O. Trevelyan) in the remarks he had made on that subject. He found himself more in agreement with the right hon. Member for Cambridge University as to the relative importance of Greek and Latin. The difficulty in relation to the many bursaries at Aberdeen was that the Commissioners should have laid down one stereotyped rule for them all, and not trusted the University authorities to make varying rules. He could not understand why the Commissioners, for whom he had the highest respect, should have thought it necessary to include Aberdeen in the same Ordinances as the other Universities, and to apply the same rule to all the bursaries. There was a very strong feeling in Aberdeen on this subject, and he believed that the general wish of the city and the neighbourhood was that which had been expressed by the hon. Member for Kincardineshire.

Sir HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.) said, that as the only other Member of the Commission present he wished to express his strong feeling in favour of the Ordinance. No one would think that he had any distinct preference for Greek over the modern languages. On the contrary. But justice must be done. The Commissioners had endeavoured to put these subjects on an equality with respect to the entrance examination. The difficulty of the situation was this—that if an adverse vote of the House were given, the whole of the Ordinance must be put back for at least one year. The other Universities were prepared to send in their pupils on the footing arranged by the Commissioners, and they were satisfied with it. If, in the course of time, Aberdeen found that the proposed scheme worked adversely, the remedy was in the University's own hands in the way of a reference to the Privy Council, and therefore it was not proper to interfere with the result which the Commission had unanimously arrived at. On behalf of Lord Kelvin and himself, he wished to say that the subject of dynamics was introduced at their distinct request, because that subject could be taught with mathematical accuracy. That was not the case with biology or geology, and the other "ologies." For school-work a subject was needed which could be treated with mathematical precision. He entreated the House to support the Ordinance.

Mr. R. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.), said, he wished, as a representative—which he was entitled to be in different ways—of three Scotch Universities, if not of every University in Scotland except Aberdeen, to say that he entirely dissented from the style of remarks indulged in by his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, and also by one of the Members for Glasgow. With respect to the Secretary for Scotland, he was disappointed with his remarks. They were very unnatural from him. He knew the right hon. Gentleman was a good Greek scholar, and could read Greek with intelligence, and occasionally with pleasure, and he was extremely sorry that he should have discouraged the enjoyment of that pleasure on the part of any portion of his (Mr. Wallace's) fellow-countrymen, and his own constituents beyond the Tweed. It was unworthy of him. As to the President of the Board of Trade, he always heard his opinions on any subject with a large amount of deliberation. He had studied his books, and more particularly that great work on "The American Commonwealth." He had even read again the last edition of it. He had listened to his arguments against the power and usefulness of Greek in Aberdeen, but at that time in the morning he did not want to go far into the subject. He simply wished to say that, having been connected all his life with Scotch Universities and Scotch Education, he deplored, and would continue to deplore if necessary, the idea of diminishing the power of Greek literature in Scotch education. They had far too little Greek in their academic curriculum and their University studies. He would not go back to the days of Dr. Johnson, and quote what he said about the relative connection between Scotland and England. He thought it was too just. Since that time they had been endeavouring to make up their leeway, and knew by experience the power and usefulness of Greek studies, though they recognised that of Latin studies. He thought that every effort to excite an interest and enthusiasm, if possible, in the study of the Greek originals was an effort to elevate the thoughts of humanity and to inspire the populations with not merely what was useful in the modern conception, but inspiring in regard to every idea that helped towards a higher ideal of humanity. He did not desire to argue the question at that late hour, but as a Representative of various Scotch Universities he desired simply to urge as strongly as possible that no discouragement should be given in the Division to Greek studies.

The House divided:—Ayes, 45; Noes, 101.—(Division List No. 18.)

SHOP HOURS ACT AMENDMENT.

Bill to amend the Shop Hours Acts,—ordered to be brought in by Mr. Provand, Colonel Bridgeman, Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Channing, and Mr. Rankin.

Bill presented accordingly, and read first time. To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 145.]

And, it being after one of the Clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 1st March, 1895.

Private business only was done.

House adjourned shortly after half-past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 1st March 1895.

The House met soon after Two of the clock.

SOUTH METROPOLITAN GAS BILL.

On the Motion for Second Reading,

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.), who had on the Paper a notice to move the rejection of the Bill, said, he fully realised the importance of moving the rejection of a Bill of this kind on the Second Reading. He knew he would be told that he ought to allow this Bill to go through Committee in order that it might be threshed out. When, however, they objected to the principle underlying a Bill, they were bound to oppose it and see whether the House endorsed that principle or not. His main point was whether the House was to give a private company the power to do what was known on the Stock Exchange as "watering" its capital. They now knew that the gas supply of London was an absolute monopoly. Mr. Livesey, in a lecture he delivered some months ago, said there was no such thing as competition. The Bill was supposed to be a very simple one. It asked the House to convert £2,000,000 of capital into £4,000,000 of capital, and to reduce the statutory dividend of the Company from 10 to 5 per cent. What was the history of this Bill? There had been at one time a possible reason for the promoters bringing this Bill into the House. but that reason had disappeared. The reason at the bottom of this Bill had not been the multiplication of the capital or the division of the interest; the Bill had undoubtedly sprung from the ingenuity of Mr. Livesey. That gentleman had desired to develop his opinions in regard to the relations of capital and labour which he had carried out in his profit-sharing scheme, and had therefore desired that facilities should be given for placing one or two workmen upon the Directorate of the Company. The clause embodying this idea, however, had been dropped out of the Bill—he admitted through no fault of Mr. Livesey—but because the shareholders, backed up by the majority of the Directors, were against him. With its disappearance the reason for bringing the Bill before the House had also disappeared, The promoters of the Bill would, of course, make the most they possibly could of the advantages of the scheme now proposed. He ventured to say he understood fairly well both the auction and the sliding scale clauses. By Clause 15, the statutory standard was 3s. 6d. per thousand feet, and he thought that all these statutory standards were ridiculously high, whether in the case of the London Gas Companies or such Companies as the Liverpool Gas Company. The Gas Company had its powers already, and should not, he contended, ask the House to re-affirm its statutory dividend. It was argued that the consumer was perfectly protected because of the working of the auction clause. This was a very wise provision, but he ventured to say that not more than £800,000 of the capital had been submitted under that clause. He might be told that there was some more capital which had to be submitted under the auction clause, and he admitted it. But what was the gross sum? £600,000, and not £600,000 to be put on the market to realise all that it possibly could, but only such a sum as would realise, with all the benefits of the auction clause, £600,000. He was not going into the question of the conversion of Stock; that was largely a question for the stockholders themselves. The real reason for the promotion of the Bill was to facilitate the sale of Stock by its conversion into one single Stock. That was not a question on which the Company ought to come to Parliament. Let them look at the matter from a public standpoint. They were asked to convert the Stock and give it a face value of double the nominal value. Supposing that the conditions of lighting changed, and this stock went back to somewhere approaching its original value, the persons who had bought off the present holders would consider that they had bought the capital value on the face of the Stock ; and if at any time the authorities should want to buy the undertaking, they would consider that some system of confiscation was taking place if they did not get the full face value. He thought it was a very serious thing indeed for the House to interfere in a transaction of this kind. The promoters had issued a statement of their reasons for introducing the Bill, and among them he found—first, that they pointed out that consolidation of the stock made the market value go up. He admitted that, and would ask the House whether that was not giving a bonus to the whole of those who at present held the stock. But the next reason given was contradictory of the first, because the promoters pointed out that in Paragraph 3 of the Bill power was given to enable consumers and those in the employment of the company to buy any unissued stock at the then market price of the company's stock. They expressed a desire that those small holders might be created, yet first of all they forced up the stock to its highest value. Before he sat down he wished to appeal to the President of the Board of Trade to seriously consider, from a public point of view, what he intended to say on the question. The right hon. Gentleman might feel justified in supporting the Bill. At any rate he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would very closely consider whether it was really to the interests if the community at large that the proposed change should take place. He had not raised the question of the dividends of the company, but he should probably do so at a later stage if the Bill passed. He had mainly devoted his attention to the principle underlying the Bill, and he hoped the House would reject it in the public interest.

Mr. F. G. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said, he would not follow the hon. Member for Finsbury into a discussion of a clause that was not in the Bill, but he would endeavour as shortly as possible to put the true reasons and the true objects of the Bill before the House. The hon. Member stated at the opening of his speech that only the interests of a particular class, and not the interests of the whole community, would be benefited by the Bill. He did not think the hon. Member really understood the effect of the Bill. At the present time there were three classes of stock in this company, and it was proposed to consolidate them into one stock, and to reduce the statutory dividend from 10 per cent. to a statutory dividend of 5 per cent., at the same time doubling the stock, the effect of which would be that the dividend would remain exactly the same, the actual capital would remain the same, and the company would gain no advantage whatever as far as regarded both capital and dividend. The hon. Member was under a delusion in supposing that the capital of the company would be increased by the Bill. The capital, of course, would be doubled. Suppose, therefore, the ordinary stock stood at 300, if the Bill passed it would stand at 150. It was quite possible that the new stock would command a higher premium in the market, and that would be an advantage to the community, as he would show. There was £600,000 or £700,000 of fresh stock to be issued by auction. It was very evident that if they wished to raise £15,000 and the stock stood at 150, they would have to issue only £10,000 in order to get that £15,000, but if the stock only stood at 100 they would have to issue £15,000 nominal capital to obtain £15,000 money. That being so, in the event of the County Council wanting to buy the company, they would have to buy up a less nominal amount of stock than if they had to raise £15,000 of stock, which could only be obtained at par. In that way the capital of the company would not be increased, and when the new stock was issued they would be able to obtain a larger amount of money with a smaller amount of capital than at present. In the event of the County Council, or any local body, therefore, buying up the company, the amount of nominal capital they would have to deal with would be smaller than if the Bill did not become law. The hon. Member had spoken about watering the stock. He did not think the hon. Member knew what watering meant. It was issuing new capital for which no money was raised, and it would rank for dividend with the original stock; whereas, in the present instance, while the amount of stock was doubled, the statutory dividend was also halved. Therefore, there would be no larger amount of money required to be earned by the company to pay the statutory dividend. The hon. Member had stated that certain portions of the existing capital had not been raised by tender. That might be so, but the present Bill would not affect this in any way. The stock would remain the same as now. The effect of the Bill on the consumer would not be at all a disadvantage, because it would enable the company to borrow money at lower rates. Its effect on the shareholder would be that he would have a better market for his security, while the Bill would really be an advantage to a purchasing body. Under those circumstances he failed to see why the House should object to read the Bill a second time.

MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green) said the hon. Member for Peckham had shown that the Bill was absolutely unnecessary, for he had endeavoured to prove that it was not going at all to change the existing condition of things. The hon. Member was quite right, from his standpoint, in not discussing the history of the Bill. When the clause which had been referred to was struck out, it seemed to him that all reason for the Bill, even if any had existed before, had gone. Again, if there was to be no change in regard to either the capital or dividend of the company, why on earth should the House have been troubled with this jugglery of finance? The first clause of the Bill was—

> "To convert the capital of the Company entitled to the said standard 10 per cent. dividend into double the nominal amount to be entitled to a standard rate of dividend of 5 per cent., being half the present standard dividend."

Exaculy, they were going to double their stock, and a person holding £400 stock wul d in future, if the Bill passed, receive 5 per cent. on each £200 instead of 10 per cent. on the £400 as now. It was true that this would not affect the shareholder, nominally he would remain in the same position; but there was something behind this. Ten per cent. in the present state of the market looked a very large sum. There were few businesses or companies that could now pay the 10 per cent.; yet this company was paying 13 per cent. But the promoters of this Bill, though halving the stock, would make the dividend appear as only 5 per cent., a reasonable amount. If the County Council or any other body came forward with proposals to purchase the Company, the Committee upstairs dealing with the matter would, no doubt, thought the promoters of the Bill, regard 10 per cent. much too high as a basis of purchase, especially in view of the possible competition of the electric light in the future. But if the Gas Company came before the Committee with a 5 per cent. basis, though their share capital had been doubled, it would look such a modest sum that the Committee might feel inclined to pass it. A Committe should not be called upon to deal with the principle of this Bill. The House owed a debt of gratitude to its private Bill Committees for preserving it from being tainted with corruption. And it ought to protect those Committees, and ought not to leave them to deal with delicate questions of this kind. The House itself ought in future to watch very carefully any Bills brought in affecting gas, water, or other monopolies. In the case of Gas Companies all competition had been done away with by mutual arrangements in order that their power of earning dividends should not be interfered with. The House would do well to reject the Bill. There was no real reason for it. The promoters had practically abandoned the only reason for its introduction, and so far as working men were concerned, they were now in a position to say "Thank you for nothing." The principle that a working man should be entitled to buy the stock of the Company in which he was employed was good, but in this case it could not be applied; and it was cheap patriotism to ask the House to sanction a Bill, the original object of which was by no means carried out in its provisions.

*MR. H. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said, the hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill had argued that it established a monopoly. If they were to discuss the question whether Gas Companies had a monopoly they had better review the whole of their Legislation relating to these Companies since 1847. But the Bill established no monopoly of any kind. Since auction clauses and sliding scales had been put in Gas Bills, Gas Companies were partners with the public, and the public got the better share of the profits. What was the fact? The last speaker said the shareholders got 10 per cent.; but it must be remembered that £309 had to be paid for £100 worth of stock. The name of Mr. Livesey, the Chairman of the Company—a man who for single-mindedness of purpose and friendship to the working classes had no superior, and whose Company was the pioneer in giving cheap gas and establishing a system of profit-sharing—was a voucher for the fairness of the Bill towards the working classes. The Bill provided that the three classes of stock into which the capital of the Company was divided should be unified. That unification of stock would no doubt make it more valuable, and he was at a loss to know why the shareholders in a Joint Stock Company were not to be allowed to get any natural improvement in the value of their property when it injured nobody else. For the purposes of unification it was proposed to read each £100 of stock as £200. But that would not fix either the market value or the intrinsic value of the stock, and therefore no harm was done to anybody. It had always been the practice of the House to allow joint stock companies, whose enterprise had built the foundation of the mercantile prosperity of this country during the past half century, to rearrange their capital provided no hardship was inflicted on the public. But it was not the only object of the Bill. The hon. Member opposite said the Bill had its origin in a clause for the purpose of enabling working men to be placed on the Board, and that as that clause had since been withdrawn, he, as a friend of the working man, objected to the Bill. But what did the Bill do for the working man? It provided for the division of stock into small sums; and thus an industrious and thrifty working man, who was able to save £5, would, if he invested it in the stock of the Company, become a partner with his masters and have a right to vote at the meetings of the Company. Further, they found that the Company took upon themselves a very onerous responsibility at their own expense for the purpose of saving a great deal of trouble to the poor holders of stock in the transfer of that stock. It enabled them, without the expense of a trust deed, to take from their workmen a simple direction in writing as to the persons to whom after their death the stock was to devolve. It enabled the Company to deal, after a man's death, with his stock as well as any money derived from the profit-sharing system, and to place them in a very inexpensive manner among the relatives or other appointees of their workmen. But, even if the Bill did not contain these beneficent provisions, and only contained the clauses dealing with capital, he maintained that the House would be justified in accepting it on principle. There were several reasons why this Bill should go before Committee. Power was given in it for the issue of £600,000 additional capital already sanctioned, in an improved manner, which would benefit the company and the public by reason of the unified character of the stock. It would increase this in volume, and there would be the benefit of the appreciation which the markets always gave to a large volume of unified stock. They would get a much larger sum of money for a much smaller amount of nominal capital, and what were the provisions in the Bill relative to that? It was not to be offered to the public until some of it had been offered at the market price in the previous week to the workmen of the company and the consumers, so that they, so to speak, were to have the first pull. The hon. Member had spoken of the dividend being 13 per cent., but considering the price which would have to be paid for the shares by auction, the dividend was only about 4 per cent. He trusted that the ordinary course would be pursued, and that the Bill would be allowed to go upstairs to a Committee.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said, his hon. Friend the Member for Finsbury had given long and careful attention to these gas questions, and was justified in calling the attention of the House to some of the provisions in this Bill. The points upon which the discussion had occurred, were what would be the financial effect of the various proposals; whether they would benefit the consumer or the public or how much benefit there would be to the shareholders. The House must, however, have had some difficulty in following some of the arguments, although those of the hon. Member for Camberwell were very lucid indeed. The usual procedure was to send these matters to a Committee for consideration, and he did not think that any grounds had been shown, either by the Mover or the Seconder of the Amendment, for the rejection of the Bill, for distrusting the ability or the impartiality of any Committee that might be appointed by the House to consider this question. Every Session questions quite as difficult as these were submitted to Committees. The hon. Member, however, was warranted in bringing the matter before the House, because whenever companies came to Parliament in circumstances such as these, they came, as it were, for a re-assertion of their Parliamentary title, and thereby were considered to have strengthened their position. Complaints by the consumers still existed, but they arose far more in the case of the north of the Thames Companies than in the case of this one, and the hon. Member for East Finsbury would remember that he headed a deputation which came to the Board of Trade from the vestries in North London stating a case against the Gaslight and Coke Company, upon which occasion he held this particular Company up as a model of what Gas Companies should be. His hon. Friend and the deputation had on that occasion asked for an enquiry, and he believed that the vestries had subsequently expressed a wish that the enquiry should be by a Select Committee of the House. If such an enquiry were to take place, it would afford an opportunity for dealing with the larger questions which the hon. Member had raised, and it was therefore still less necessary to ask the House to come to a conclusion upon those large questions now. For that reason, and reminding his hon. Friend that a Division might prejudice the case raised, he would ask his hon. Friend to withdraw his Amendment and allow the Bill to be considered by a Committee of the House.

MR. J. ROWLANDS asked leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Bill read 2°.

QUESTIONS.

THE PARISH CONSTABLES ACT.

MR. H. D. GREENE (Shrewsbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of the Local Government Board, whether the duty of making out lists of persons liable to serve, or recommending them to serve, as unpaid parish constables, under 5 and 6 Vict., c. 109, and the Parish Constables Act 1872, now rests with parish councils; whether the parish council can lawfully be summoned by the overseers to hold a meeting for the purposes set forth in Section 3, and whether the overseers are liable to the penalties referred to in Section 9, if they do not return lists, the preparation of which they have no power to control, and if they do not attend the special sessions to verify lists which they have now no power to return under Section 10; whether persons, selected and appointed by justices as unpaid constables, although not nominated by a parish council, can be fined for refusing to act or be sworn in; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will arrange that by special statute or by the Statute Law Revision Act, provisions of the law rendered useless by the Local Government Act 1894, or inconsistent therewith, shall be repealed this Session.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Sir WALTER FOSTER, Derby, Ilkeston): By the 35 and 36 Vict., c. 92, unpaid parish constables are not to be appointed unless the quarter sessions by resolution determine that it is necessary that one or more parish constables shall be appointed for the parish. Where such a resolution is in force the duty of the vestry in this matter has been transferred to the parish council. The overseers are not empowered to summon a meeting of the parish council—the meeting must be summoned in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1894. It would appear that the overseers are still bound, where such a resolution is in force, to make a return to the precept of the justices, and in case the parish council have made out a list, and have furnished the overseers with a copy of it, the copy of the list should accompany the return. The overseers are also presumably obliged to attend the special sessions in such a case, in order to verify the list. The justices, it would appear, can only appoint the constables from the allowed list. Section 13 of 5 and 6 Vict., c. 109, which provided that any person appointed and not finding a substitute, should be liable to a fine, has been repealed by the 35 and 36 Vict., c. 92, which merely provides that the person chosen shall be bound to act as a constable, or to submit another person to the justices to be appointed in his stead. As regards the concluding question, I will communicate with the Statute Law Committee on the subject.

SURVEYORS OF TAXES.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether the Lords of the Treasury will be pleased to recommend to the Civil Service Commissioners that the allowance of service from actual age, when reckoning the same for a Civil Service competition, granted to registered copyists, be extended to private clerks to surveyors of taxes, who perform analogous duties to those of copyists, and, though not admitted by examination, have to be certified as competent to the Board of Inland Revenue by the surveyor by whom employed?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The conditions of the employment by surveyors of taxes of private clerks do not differ from those under which many other uncertificated persons are privately engaged by certain officers of the public service who are allowed a lump sum for the purpose, and exceptional regulations could not therefore be made in the special interest of one class of such *employés*. Moreover, it is the essence of the rules under which certain persons are now given concessions in regard to age, that they have served the State as soldiers or sailors or as persons with Civil Service certificates—a condition not satisfied in the present case. I am afraid, therefore, that the Treasury would not be justified in accepting my hon. Friend's suggestion.

MR. P. J. POWER asked whether, in view of the fact that the duties of clerks had increased and that the correspondence they had to deal with was of a private and confidential character, the Secretary to the Treasury would not do something to remove the grave dissatisfaction that existed among the clerks.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, he was aware that dissatisfaction existed, but it would be impossible to do what the hon. Member wished without doing it also for clerks in other departments who were in a similar position.

NEWSPAPERS IN GAOLS AND DOCKYARDS.

MR. T. B. CURRAN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he is aware that the authorities at Aldershot Gaol, on a recent occasion, refused permission to a man named Barry to supply his son, an untried prisoner, with a copy of *Reynolds's Newspaper*, telling him that he would be at liberty to supply him with copies of Conservative weekly journals; also that the police at Chatham Dockyard refused to allow the newspaper boys, under instructions from the authorities, to supply *Reynolds's Newspaper* to the sailors on board Her Majestys' ships; and, if this state of things be true, will he explain the reason for this action of the authorities mentioned?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I am informed by the War Office that there is no foundation whatever for the statement as to Aldershot Gaol, and that no prisoner of the name of Barry has been confined in the Aldershot Gaol during the last six years. I am also informed by the Admiralty that the statement that the sale of *Reynolds's Newspaper* is not permitted on board the Depôt is without foundation. No such order has been issued either directly or indirectly, and no restrictions have been placed upon the sale of this paper to the men; and so far as the police are concerned, newsboys, with permission of the Dockyard authorities, are at all times allowed by the police to enter the Dockyard, and no question is ever asked as to which newspapers they carry.

THE CROAGH DISPENSARY COMMITTEE.

MR. J. MAINS (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) how many meetings have been held by the Croagh Dispensary Committee, Ballycastle, North Antrim, during the past year, and what has been the average attendance at each meeting; (2) if the secretary always writes the minutes, or does the medical officer perform that duty; and (3) if it is true that some of the members have never attended any meeting since their election by the board of guardians?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Secretary to the Dispensary Committes reports—(1) that five committee meetings have been held during the past year, the average attendance at each meeting being 3·4; (2) the secretary always writes the minutes when present, and to his knowledge the medical officer never does so; (3) two of the members of the committee have never attended any meeting since their election by the guardians.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. J P. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to the distress in Goleen (a portion of the Schull union), and what remedy he purposes applying to it.

MR. J. MORLEY: I have called for a special report as to the condition of the district referred to in the question. Meantime I may observe that the guardians of this union have already informed the Local Government Board that a loan for obtaining seed potatoes would not be required in the union this year.

MR. T. D. SULLIVAN (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has received representations from several districts of Western Donegal, other than those mentioned in recent statements of his and included in the Glenties union, testifying to the existence of acute distress in these places; and whether he will be so good as to direct that action shall promptly be taken to meet the requirements of those cases, and secure that the destitute people in those localities shall share in the benefit of the relief works which are about to be started?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have received several representations from districts in West Donegal, other than those included in the Glenties union, and inquiries have been made from time to time regarding the condition of the poorer classes in these localities. The Local Government Board are of opinion, however, that although there may be sporadic cases of destitution in the mountain districts and along the coast, yet they have no reason to think that the ordinary Poor Law will be unable to deal with any such cases that may arise. The Board's Inspector will again report in the course of a day or two on the condition of portions of Western Donegal.

DEFALCATIONS OF CESS COLLECTORS.

MR. C. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether anything has been recovered from the estates of the brothers Cumming, county cess collectors, Monaghan, who were defaulters to a very large amount; (2) whether the sureties have paid anything of the heavy deficit; (3) whether he is aware that one of the Cummings is in a large way of business as owner of mills, and possesses a well-stocked farm, and that the other carries on a public-house in Ballybay; and (4) whether there is any method of compelling the grand jury of the county to make some effort to recover some part of the moneys either from the defaulters or their sureties.

MR. J. MORLEY: The secretary to the grand jury, has written as follows in reply to the several inquiries in this question:—

"(1) A very considerable sum has been already recovered and lodged to the credit of the County Treasurers on foot of the defalcations of Henry Cumming and Thomas Cumming, Barony Constables. (2) Portion of the money recovered was levied from the sureties. (3) Both the defaulting Barony Constables have been adjudicated bankrupts at the instance of the County Treasurers; and the Bankruptcy

Court is in possession of all their property, and is now realising it. The man who carries on the public-house in Ballybay is not liable as principal or surety. (4) Two of the sureties have also been adjudicated bankrupts. Another surety owns freehold property against which the claim of the County has been registered as a mortgage. Two farms have been put up for sale, but the sale had to be adjourned for want of bidders, and the farms remain on hands. Everything is being done that can be done to realise the amount still due, and it is believed that the greater part of it will be recovered."

KEW GARDEN EMPLOYÉS.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he will extend to the *employés* in the Royal Gardens, Kew, the improvement in emoluments recently conceded to the *employés* in the Royal Parks inside the Metropolitan area?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HERBERT J. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): This question has already been under my consideration; but the details of the arrangements, consequent on the increase of the minimum wage, are not yet quite settled.

SUSPENSION OF AN IRISH POST MASTER.

MR. J. MAINS: I beg to ask the Postmaster General on what date was Mr. M. S. Philson, Postmaster, Omagh, suspended; what were the charges on which he was suspended; and, has there been any inquiry; if so, will he state what is the result?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): Mr. Philson, Postmaster of Omagh, was suspended on the 20th November last. The charges on which he was suspended involved irregularities of account, and these have been the subject of prolonged inquiry; but, having regard to Mr. Philson's explanation, and also to the fact that between two printed forms of direction with which he had been supplied, there were, undoubted inconsistencies which may have led him into error, I considered the case to be not free from doubt, and so he was allowed to resume duty.

DELAGOA BAY RAILWAY.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the jurists appointed some five years ago to adjudicate on the claims of the bondholders and others in connection with the Delagoa Bay Railway have come to any decision; and, if they have, whether their decision is that the railway shall be sold by auction to provide funds for paying the amount due from the Portuguese Government to the claimants.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The answer to the hon. Member's question is in the negative. The exchange of documents has been effected, but the pleadings must take place before the Tribunal of Arbitration can pronounce judgment.

MARYLEBONE WESTERN NATIONAL SCHOOL.

MR. T. SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that Mr. J. H. Rawlins applied last July to the managers of the Marylebone Western National School to inspect their last report and statements of receipts and expenditure, under Article 89 of the Code; that, in consequence of the delays interposed by the managers, the Department wrote to them on 10th October, and again on 8th November, ordering them to produce the whole of the original report; and that Mr. Rawlins wrote to the Department on 5th February that he had not yet been shown the copy of the statement of receipts and expenditure; and, whether, seeing that the production of these documents under Article 89 of the Code is a condition of the payment of annual grants, he will mark his sense of the conduct of the managers by withdrawing the whole or a portion of the grant, in accordance with article No. 92 of the Code; or, if not, what steps he will take to secure the prompt observance of this article of the Code?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The statements in the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question are substantially correct. It is a condition of annual grants that school managers must submit the report and accounts to inspection, and permit copies or extracts to be made from them. The managers of the school finally showed Mr. Rawlins the complete report on the 5th January, but still withheld the accounts. On the 19th of February, however, they informed the Department that they would submit the accounts to him whenever he liked to call.

THE REDEMPTION OF RENT ACT, 1891.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the decision in the Irish Court of Appeal in the case of Mairs *v.* Leckey, practically reversing the Land Commission in this case; whether he is aware that many precisely similar cases have been ruled against the tenants, on the assumption that Mr. Justice Bewley's decision was right in Law; and whether, if tenants so decided against have no redress, he will take care to deal with their cases in the Land Bill?

MR. J. MORLEY: My attention has been drawn to the decision of the Irish Court of Appeal in the case of Mairs *v.* Leckey, substantially reversing the decision of the Land Commission. The question decided arose under the Redemption of Rent Act, 1891, and, no doubt, other cases had been decided on the assumption that Mr. Justice Bewley's view, now reversed by the Court of Appeal, was right in point of law. I think he will see that it is impossible to give a remedy for those who have suffered from decisions in previous cases. I am glad to think that the number of the earlier cases covered by the decision is not very large. But in regard to the last paragraph I have only to say now that I hope the hon. Member will not be disappointed on Monday.

MR. R. M. DANE (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary whether he could see his way to put provisions in the Bill to enable those who had suffered to bring their cases into Court again, and when the text of the Bill would be available?

MR. J. MORLEY did not reply.

THE COMMANDEERING TREATY.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, what was the date of the Convention between Sir Henry Loch and President Kruger abolishing the commandeering of British subjects; whether that Convention requires the ratification of the Boer Volksraad in order to become law; if, at the late meeting of the Volksraad in February, that body postponed the consideration of that subject to its summer meeting; and whether the British subjects who were forcibly commandeered for the campaign against Malaboch in August last have ever received the pay for the services which the Boer Government promised Sir Henry Loch they should receive?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The Commandeering Treaty was signed in February 1895. The Treaty requires the ratification of the Volksraad before it becomes law. I have already more than once stated that its consideration has been, in the ordinary course, postponed until the ordinary Session of the Volksraad; but that, meanwhile, the undertaking of the President of June last that British subjects shall no more be commandeered for personal military service remains in force. I am not aware that the Government of the South African Republic made any promise to Sir Henry Loch in regard to the pay to be given to those who were commandeered.

LONDON LETTER CARRIERS.

MR. A. M. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, what subordinate or other officials of the Postal Service are responsible for proper neatness of dress on the part of the London letter carriers, and for their wearing the prescribed uniform provided for them out of public money?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: Detailed instructions are issued from time to time, having for their object to secure neatness of appearance on the part of the London Postmen in the wearing of their uniforms, and it is the duty of the Postmasters, Inspectors, and other Superintending Officers to see that these instructions are duly obeyed.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can now inform the House what course the Government intend to take with regard to the Christian Brothers?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have informed the hon. Member for Tyrone and other gentlemen that the question affecting the Christian Brothers and other questions have been referred to the National Education Board as a preliminary stage to further consideration of what can and cannot be done.

Colonel NOLAN asked when the decision of the Board would be known?

Mr. MORLEY: It is impossible to say. The note is in the hands of the National Education Board and in the preliminary stage, and how long it will remain there I have no means of saying.

IRISH BOARD OF NATIONAL EDUCATION.

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is his intention to deal with the question lately referred to the Irish Board of National Education by a Bill, instead of by an Amendment of the Rules of the Board, as indicated by his reference?

Mr. J. MORLEY said, it was certainly not his intention to proceed in this matter by way of legislation. The Lord Lieutenant had the power to sanction, or to refuse his sanction to any alteration of the Rules proposed by the National Board; and it was the method which he proposed to adopt in effecting any change that might be necessary. What he promised to the hon. Member for South Tyrone was that, if a change was sanctioned, it should not come into operation or be made effective without the House having an opportunity to express an opinion upon it.

THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Congested Districts Board have spent the money they undertook in May, 1894, to spend upon the improvement of the landing-place at Glassabeg, County Kerry; (1) whether any improvement has as yet been made to the landing-place at Brandon Creek, and whether the work promised in connection with the pier itself has been carried out; (2) if the works on Blaskett Islands have been begun, and what is going to be done towards providing a landing-place on the mainland opposite; (3) when the works at the proposed new pier at Ballymore, Ventry Harbour, will be commenced; (4) and whether, in view of the distress prevailing in these localities, owing to the want of employment from which the labouring classes are suffering, he will use his influence with the Congested Districts Board to have those of these works remaining undone proceeded with immediately, so as to relieve the people pending the opening of the ordinary spring work?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The works referred to in the first paragraph have been completed at an expenditure of £6 less than the cost estimated by the Congested Districts Board. The works mentioned in the second paragraph are practically completed with the exception of the removal of some rocks in the harbour, and this work cannot be done until the summer. The works at Blaskett Island will be carried out as soon as the islanders have given an undertaking to render certain assistance in the matter to the Engineer of the Congested Districts Board. The Board have postponed for the present the consideration of the proposed works at Ballymore, and on the mainland opposite Blaskett Islands.

DAY AND EVENING SCHOOLS.

Sir D. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if the rule laid down in the Education Department letter of 10th November, 1894, as follows, is applicable to Scotland as well as to England, and, if not, he will extend the benefits of this rule to Scotland: "A child who has passed the total exemption standard named in the bye-laws, and is so exempt from the legal obligation to attend school, may be recognised as a scholar in an evening school, notwithstanding that such scholar continues to attend a day school."

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. Trevelyan, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The provisions both of the English Education Acts and of the English Evening Continuation School Code are different from those of Scotland. The Scotch Code, Article 5, lays down clearly the rule on this point in the case of

Scotland, namely, that a scholar exempt from the legal obligation to attend school may, while earning a grant in a day school, also earn a grant in an evening school in a special subject not taught in the day school.

THE ALTERATION OF QUESTIONS.

Mr. C. DIAMOND asked a question in reference to the manner in which questions were handed in to clerks at the table, and the way they were dealt with there. He asked the Speaker whether or not, when a question was put in a form not approved by the authorities of the House, some communication might be made to the Member putting the question before it was printed and circulated in order to arrive at some settlement of its terms. He did not wish to criticise the method in which the questions were altered, but he thought that it would tend to facilitate matters and prevent repetition if an indication could be given to a member that the question as laid before the clerks at the table was not considered to be in proper form.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Wherever possible that is done, and in nearly all cases immediate notice is given to hon. Gentlemen if the question is irregular. There is every desire to consult the feelings of hon. Members by giving full notice of an irregularity.

Mr. C. DIAMOND: Several objections have been taken to questions of mine, and I have not had any communications on the matter. I am, therefore, only speaking from my personal experience.

THE IRISH LAND BILL.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) asked the Chief Secretary whether, in the Land Bill which he proposed to introduce, there would be provisions as to evicted tenants, or whether that question would be dealt with by a separate Bill?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I think it will be extremely inconvenient to answer a question on Friday with reference to a Bill that is coming before the House on Monday.

THE PRESENTATION OF BILLS.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked a question with reference to the rules of the House as to bringing up new Bills on a First Reading. He had remarked, during last Session of Parliament especially, and also in this Session, that Ministers when they introduced Bills no longer went to the bar of the House, while other hon. Members were expected to comply with the formality. Since he had been in the House he had heard some of the highest authorities insist on the necessity of equality of Members on all occasions; and he respectfully ventured to bring this matter before the Chair now in order that this habit might not become crystallised into a custom. Would it not be better, therefore, that Ministers should be asked either to comply with the regulations of the House, or that steps should be taken to have the regulations altered?

*Mr. SPEAKER: If the House wishes it, I shall take care that Ministers are not allowed to curtail their journeys to and from the bar.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT: Will the same rule apply to other Members?

*Mr. SPEAKER: I think any rule should be applicable to all.

MOTIONS.

RELIGIOUS OPINIONS (PROSECUTIONS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Gourley, Bill for the Abolition of Prosecutions for the Expression of Opinion on Matters of Religion.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday, 15th March, and to be printed. [Bill 146.]

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Seton-Karr, Bill to Amend the Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) Acts.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th April, and to be printed. [Bill 147.]

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND BILL.

On Motion of Sir C. Cameron, Bill to put an end to the Establishment of the Church of Scotland, and to deal with the Public Endowments thereof on the occurrence of vacancies.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 27th March, and to be printed. [Bill 148.]

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE QUALIFICATION REPEAL BILL.

On Motion of Mr. A. C. Morton, Bill to repeal the Law respecting the Qualifications of Justices of the Peace.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday next, at Two of the clock, and to be printed. [Bill 149.]

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir A. K. Rollit, Bill to amend the Public Health Acts with respect to Sewers.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 150.]

FARM SERVANTS' HOLIDAY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Napier, Bill to give Powers to Parish Councils in Scotland to fix provisionally Holidays and Half-Holidays for Farm Servants in Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday, 15th March, and to be printed. [Bill 151.]

HYPOTHEC (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Provand, Bill to amend the Law of Hypothec in Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, 11th March. [Bill 152.]

LEICESTER ELECTION WRITS.

The Select Committee appointed to consider and report upon the recent Election and Return for the Borough of Leicester was nominated of:—Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Balfour, Sir James Carmichael, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Curzon, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. T. M. Healy, Sir Henry James, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. MacNeill, Sir George Osborne Morgan, Sir John Mowbray, and Viscount Wolmer.

Ordered,—That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered,—That five be the quorum.

Ordered, — That the Clerk of the Crown do produce to the said Committee copies of the writs issued for holding elections for the said Borough and the Return thereto.—(*Sir Henry James.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS BILL.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.), in intoducing a "Bill to amend and extend the Law relating to Factories and Workshops," said, it was a measure which covered a wide area of ground, and involved the consideration of a number of not very closely connected technical details. The Bill was framed in what the Government believed to be the spirit which had animated the whole of our Factory Legislation. The aim and intention of that Legislation he understood to be to provide for all classes of workers to whom it applied those reasonable conditions of safety for life and health which were in fact observed by wise employers and well-conducted undertakings. But what he might call the standard of safety arose from time to time; and it had been recognised by all parties in the State that it was the duty of Governments and of Parliaments to recognise the advance of public opinion, to recognise what he might describe as the quickening of the public conscience in this matter, which, by general consent, could not safely be left to individual initiative and enterprise. The Government proposed in this Bill to extend in certain directions the existing law, and to make provision for some cases with which that law in its present shape did not attempt to deal. For the purposes of exposition he would group the provisions under two or three heads. First, he would call the attention of the House to certain provisions proposed for further safeguarding the life and health of the workers in factories and workshops, and for improving the sanitary conditions under which they worked. He would begin with the question of overcrowding. To allow a factory to be overcrowded was already an offence; but the term "overcrowding" was vague and elastic, and permitted, as experience showed, of different interpretations in different trades and in different parts of the country. The Government had come to the conclusion, after consulting practical men, and after taking the advice of Her Majesty's Inspectors, that it would be desirable to lay down a statutory definition of "overcrowding" which would be applicable to every factory and workshop in the country. The proposal was, that in all factories and workshops there should be a minimum 250 cubic feet of space for every person, and 400 cubic feet of space for every person during overtime. Further, that the Secretary of State should be empowered to add to this minimum in hours during which artificial light was employed. That provision would make the law uniform, and it would not impose any practical hardship on the employers of labour, while it would secure sanitary conditions in this important respect. Next, there were some points under the same general head relating to machinery. The law at present prohibited children from cleaning machines in motion, and the Government thought that that prohibition ought to be extended from children to young persons. Many accidents of a serious, and some of a fatal, character had been due to the carelessness or inexperience of young persons in cleaning machines. Further—but the Government did not think it fair or advisable to apply this provision to the factories already in existence—it was proposed that in all new factories where there were self-acting machines, such as the cotton looms, the machines should not be allowed to run out within 18in. of any pillar or fixed structure in the factory. A large number of melancholy accidents were due to the narrow space left between the extreme minimum of the machine and the fixed structure towards which it moved, and many children and young persons had been crushed. This was not a provision to which the manufacturers of the country would object. Then, as to the dangers from fire, which were perhaps more common in workshops than in factories, there were provisions in the Act of 1891 which, in effect, left the duty of seeing that adequate means of escape were provided to the sanitary authorities. Experience of the working of that Act showed that the duty had been very largely neglected by those on whose shoulders it was intended to lie. The Government, recognising the difficulties in the way of enabling one of Her Majesty's Inspectors to require structural changes, proposed that a court of summary jurisdiction should, on the application of an Inspector, be empowered to make an order for the provision of movable fire-escapes, not involving structural changes, wherever, in the opinion of the court, the premises were not sufficiently protected in that respect. Next, as to certain provisions in relation to dangerous premises and dangerous machines: the law at present was very defective, not in the matter of inspection, but in the matter of affording a speedy and adequate remedy. The Bill first dealt with premises which were in an unfit state either for manufacturing processes generally, or for the particular process carried on. Power was given to a court of summary jurisdiction, on the complaint of an Inspector, and on being satisfied that any manufacturing process could not be carried on without danger to health, to prohibit the premises from being used until the necessary works had been carried out to put them in a proper condition. This provision was strictly analogous to those in the Public Health Acts with reference to insanitary dwelling-houses, the operation of which had been found most useful. In the same way the Bill dealt with the case of dangerous machines. He had had cases brought to his notice—particularly in the Sheffield cutlery trade—where grindstones, known or reasonably suspected to be dangerous, the breaking of which was often attended with serious consequences to a large number of persons, went on being worked without there being any effective power to stop them. When the injury had been done, action both civil and criminal could be taken, but the law at present provided no means of preventing the injury. The Bill proposed that powers should be given to a Court of summary jurisdiction to act on the motion of an inspector, and to require such machines to be disused until they had been put into a proper condition, or, if incapable of that, to be disused altogether. The Government thought this matter to be so important that they proposed to go further, and to enable the magistrate, when a complaint had been made, to make an interim order *ex parte*, until the complaint could be heard in the regular way. Next, as to the question of accidents, still falling within the first category. There were somewhat technical provisions to simplify and extend the law in relation to the notification of accidents. Every occupier of a workshop or factory was to be required to keep a register of accidents open to the inspection of Her Majesty's Inspectors and the certifying surgeons. That provision would be of great benefit in tracing injuries to their causes. There was, further, a provision, to which he attached very much importance, that power should be given to the Secretary of State—a power already possessed by him under the Coal Mines Act in relation to accidents in mines—to direct an inquiry to be made into any accident in a factory or workshop. So far he had been dealing with the internal arrangements of factories and workshops; he now passed to the question of out-work. That was a subject to which much attention had been drawn in connection with what was called "sweating." There was a general opinion that our Factory Legislation would be imperfect unless it not only dealt with the arrangements of factories and workshops themselves, but also put some check on the occupier evading his legal obligations by getting his work done outside, where inspection could not penetrate and the law could not be enforced. By the Act of 1891 the Secretary of State was empowered to order that in certain trades the occupier of a workshop or factory should keep lists of the names and addresses of his out-workers, which lists were to be open to inspection. The right hon. Gentleman opposite exercised that power in respect of one trade; and he had done so in respect of one or two others. The result, on the whole, had been very satisfactory, because by means of the new inspectors' assistants it had been possible in a large number of cases, especially in the East End, to track these "sweaters" to their dens. But the law was far from adequate to meet the case. Various proposals had been made. One was that the occupier of a factory or workshop who gave out-work, should be made absolutely and personally responsible for the sanitary conditions in which the work was done. He had given great attention to that proposal; and although he was entirely in sympathy with its object and intention, he believed that that broad and general regulation would be impracticable. In the shawl trade, for instance, work was given out in London, and the shawls were often made in very remote parts of the country. It would be altogether unreasonable to require that a trader in London or a large manufacturing town should not give out-work, except at his own risk and peril, to be done in one of these remote places, in relation to the actual conditions of which he could have no knowledge, and exercise no control. The Bill took a somewhat milder course, and one which in practice would be more effective. Power was given to the Secretary of State to schedule or order that the provisions which he was about to describe should apply to certain classes of work—where the evil was supposed to exist, and in certain areas to be prescribed. In those cases the law would be as follows:—It having come to the knowledge of one of Her Majesty's Inspectors that out-work was being carried on in an insanitary place, his duty would be to give notice to the employer. Then, after one month, if the employer continued to give out-work to be done in the place, and the place were proved to be insanitary, the employer would be liable to a penalty. The employer would be in this position—that, having received notice, he would be responsible either for putting the place in a proper sanitary condition or for discontinuing to employ the people who worked there. That was an obligation which might be fairly imposed; and, indirectly, it would have the effect of destroying to a large extent the sweater's trade. He would now pass to another head altogether—the provisions of the law which dealt with the period of employment and the hours of labour. Here the question of overtime came in. There are two kinds of overtime—legalised overtime, and overtime which, in the existing state of the law, was illegal, but which the machinery at the disposal of the Executive did not permit of being found out and punished. There were two kinds of legalised overtime, under two sections of the Act of 1878. The first section (53) dealt with trades where the goods were liable to be spoilt by the weather, or where the trade was subject to sudden press of orders, or to a press of work at recurring seasons of the year. The law allowed to women and young persons two hours overtime a day, provided that overtime was worked not more than five days a week, or 48 days in a year. Under Section 42, which dealt with perishable goods, the law allowed overtime to women only, and in this case the overtime was restricted to five days a week, or 96 in the year. He was afraid it was impossible to abolish overtime altogether, at any rate, as regarded women; but the Government proposed to take as long a step in that direction, as might be practicable, by prohibiting absolutely for the future overtime in the case of young persons; and if this Bill were passed the effect would be that no person under 18 would be allowed to work overtime. In the case of women, with whose power of work it was not proposed to interfere, the Government thought the hours at present allowed were undoubtedly long, and it was proposed, under Section 53, to reduce them from five days to three, and from 48 days in the year to 38, and under Section 56 to 60 days a year. Experience showed that that would not involve any interference with the actual course of business, for there were few businesses at all, and he might say no well-conducted business, where, in any emergency, overtime was required to be worked for a longer time. Another point in relation to overtime was the overtime allowed to male young persons. Then he came to cases in which the provisions of the law as to the hours of women, young persons, and young children, were evaded by giving out home-work to be done after hours. That was a common way of escaping and infringing the provisions of the existing law. The Government proposed to deal with these cases by prohibiting altogether home-work for children employed in factories and workshops; and, next, to provide against any woman or young person employed for full hours in a factory or workshop taking home work or being afterwards employed in a shop, which was a very common thing. He could not pass from this head of the subject without alluding to an omission in the Bill which was certain to excite some comment. The Bill did not contain any provision for raising the minimum age at which children could be employed. The House would remember that, under the Act of 1891, the employment of children under 11 was prohibited. Many (including himself) thought that the minimum age ought to be raised from 11 to 12. The proposal, if not advocated, was at least assented to by the representative of the British Government at the Berlin Conference, and, as far as the Government were concerned, they would be most happy to see it enacted. It might be asked why had they not introduced a provision to that effect in this Bill? Their reasons were purely practical. In the first place the regulations as to the school-age and the age of employment for children in factories and workshops were in a state of great confusion, and required to be simplified and made uniform. The Government had given a great deal of attention to the subject and would like to consolidate all the provisions relating to it and bring them into harmony with one another. The Government thought a separate Bill for the purpose would be more appropriate than the present Bill, which only touched one side of the problem. There was another serious practical difficulty. He had had careful inquiries made into this subject in all parts of the country, and he was assured that a proposal to raise the age—after only two years' experience of the 11 years limit—from 11 to 12 would excite strong and determined opposition from masters and men, and more particularly from men employed in the textile industries of Lancashire and Yorkshire. They would say:—

> "You have taken advantage of a time when trade is depressed and wages are low to deprive us of earnings which go to the maintenance of our families."

Although he did not agree with them, he would be most happy to see the provision introduced; but he was anxious to make this, if he could, a non-controversial Bill, and did not wish to sacrifice the chance of passing what he thought was a useful and beneficial Bill, as he feared he should if he attempted an angry and protracted controversy on a particular point. But if the Government discovered there was anything like a general disposition to adopt the age of 12, and insert it in the Bill, they would be in hearty sympathy with it, and would only be too glad to have their hands forced. He now came to another important subject—the extension of the Factories Acts to industries not now within it. He had expressed the opinion more than once that our factory Legislation should cover the whole area of industry, and, although that was perhaps in the nature of an ideal to be gradually attained, he thought they ought, as far as they could within the limits of what was practical, to get closer and closer to it. This Bill proposed to bring under the Factories Acts for the first time several industries at present outside its scope; and first and foremost were laundries. At present the only enactment applicable to laundries made it incumbent on an Inspector, if it appeared to him that a laundry was in an insanitary condition, to give notice to the sanitary authority, who must take action upon it. In practice this provision had been found to be of little value. He would state in two or three sentences why laundries ought to come within the scope of the Factories Act. In the first place, engines and machinery were used to a large extent in some laundries, and the fencing of the machinery was frequently neglected, and numbers of accidents were caused in consequence. Again, in steam and other laundries there was a needlessly high temperature, due partly to lack of ventilation and combination of heat and humidity, which arose from the stoves for heating irons, which were kept in the ironing rooms, where they ought not to be. Then there were in laundries excessive hours of work. Careful investigation had been made in all parts of the country, and he found that work often went on in laundries for 66, and even 85, hours a week. In many laundries there were no regular meal times. Working all night was not uncommon, and in many parts of the country ironers worked from Friday mornings until midnight on Saturday. By proper organisation of work, double shifts and expedients of that kind, he saw no difficulty in accommodating laundry work to the ordinary statutory conditions. At any rate, an experiment would be made, and if this Bill were passed some laundries would be treated as factories and other laundries as workshops under the Factories and Workshops Act. The only conditions by way of exemption were that the Act should apply only to laundries carried on by way of trade, and not to laundries where the persons employed were members of the same family. Beyond these exemptions he did not see his way to go. He proposed now to refer to another trade, or set of trades at present exempt from the operation of the law—namely, docks, wharves, and quays, and also building operations where machinery was employed. This was a sphere of industry in which accidents often occurred, serious and sometimes fatal; and the Government thought docks, wharves, and quays ought to be brought within the provisions of the Act, certainly as to the fencing of machinery, the notices of accidents, and inspection. He wished now to refer to the tenement factories, which were very common in Sheffield and that part of the country. In these factories one person was landlord of all the rooms and provided the power, and he let off the rooms to different occupiers, occuping none of the premises himself. One of the sub-occupiers hired a room, used the power provided, and sometimes worked for himself or employed a few men under him. The result was, no one being the occupier, in the technical sense, of the building as a whole, it was impossible to enforce the Act. Under the present Bill the owner of the premises would be made responsible as to the sanitary conditions, fencing of machinery, lime washing, posting up of abstracts and notices; and the schedule contained provisions peculiarly applicable to the grinding industry carried on in Sheffield, which had been agreed upon, and if carried into law would prevent a large number of avoidable accidents. Lastly, in dealing with new trades to be included in the scope of the Bill, he came to bakehouses.

*Mr. C. B. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) asked whether Section 8 of 1891 would be applied to tenement factories.

Mr. H. H. ASQUITH said, no doubt the section might be applied, and it was very desirable that there should be special rules in such cases. With regard to bakehouses the present state of the law was unsatisfactory. Some of the provisions of the law as to sanitary and other matters applied only to towns of over 5,000 inhabitants, and others only to bakehouses which had been opened since June 1883. The Government proposed that these provisions should be applied to all bakehouses, existing and future, wherever situated and whenever worked. He passed now to the special provisions for particular industries, and he came first and foremost to a question interesting to hon. Members for Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire—namely, what was commonly known as the "particulars" clause. Hon. Members representing those districts were aware that the Act of 1891, by Section 24, required that in the case of certain classes of workers paid by the piece the employers should supply the operative when giving out the work with sufficient particulars to enable him to ascertain the rate of wages which he was entitled to be paid for the work. This was a very useful provision, but it had been found inadequate. The right hon. Member for Bury introduced a Bill last year which proposed to amend the law on the subject, and their Bill, he would see, differed from his in being somewhat more comprehensive in character. In the first place, it was confined to a limited class of workers—in the cotton trade, only to weavers, winders, and reelers; and in the worsted, linen, and jute trades, to the weavers only. He proposed to extend it to every worker in every textile factory where payment was by the piece. In the next place, the existing law was defective as to the form and extent of the particulars required. The Act did not say whether particulars were to be verbal merely or in writing, though, he confessed, it was manifestly the intention of the Act that it should be furnished in writing. This had given rise to a certain amount of trouble, and there had been still more difficulty in regard to how many particulars the Act required. They proposed to define all these matters. They required the employer to furnish two sets of particulars to the men; in the first place—he was dealing, of course, only with people paid by the piece—he was to furnish particulars of the rate of wages applicable to the work, and in the next place he was to furnish particulars of the work given out to the individual workman to whom that rate of wages was to be applied. The particulars under each of these two heads were to be furnished in writing at the time when the work was given out. Special provision was made that it should be in writing, and not in symbols, as the latter were liable to misunderstanding. The provisions he had named were subject simply to two exceptions. As to the rate of wages, where the particulars were equally applicable to all workers in one room they might be exhibited on a placard, providing that the placard contained all the particulars as to the rate of wages and nothing else; and then, as to the particulars of the work to be done, that might in appropriate cases be ascertained by what was known as an automatic indicator, which was well known in the spinning branch of the cotton trade. In order that these indicators should not be misleading, they proposed to make special provisions of a highly-technical kind to secure their accuracy. He thought that when the law was amended in that way it would give satisfaction both to the employers and employed in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and would remove many harassing difficulties which had arisen as to the construction of the existing section. He passed from that to the special provisions inserted dealing with dangerous trades. By these they proposed that where a certificate was given, under Section 8 of the Act of 1891, that a trade was dangerous to life or health, the Secretary of State, by the special rules which he was empowered to make, might prohibit the employment or limit the period of employment of any class of workers engaged in that trade. He had found in framing these special rules that in connection with the lead industries and other dangerous trades he had been very much hampered by not having the power to prohibit altogether certain classes of people from engaging in certain processes; and some of the most valuable recommendations of the Departmental Committees which had investigated the conditions of these particular industries he had not been able to carry out because he had not possessed the powers which they were now asking for. The powers were not at all likely to be abused or to be used in any sense that was oppressive or injurious to the liberty of trade, and he recorded his own most deliberate opinion that it was absolutely essential to the health and life of the workers. He would mention in passing some points of detail. They proposed in the case of textile factories, where a great deal of humidity was engendered by the operations of the trade, as was the case especially in linen factories, to bring them under the provisions of the Cotton Cloth Act, 1889. They had heard a good deal of the condition of things in Belfast from this cause, and he had been much shocked to find what a large amount of preventable mortality and illness existed. Mr. Osborne, the gentleman who had been intrusted with the execution of the Cotton Cloth Act, and who was one of the ablest men in the service of the Crown, speaking with a special knowledge of Belfast, was able to report that a large amount of this mortality was due to precisely the same conditions against which the Legislation of 1889 had been directed, and, if a similar scale of temperature as that described by the Act of 1889 could be applied to the linen industry of Belfast a very great change in the condition of things would soon be brought about. By arrangements and negotiations made with the employers and employed of Belfast, he was happy to say very large and beneficial changes had been already introduced; but he hoped the House would pass this provision into law, so as to enable them in future to apply it to all the textile industries. There was another small point relevant to the same subject; they proposed that in workshops and factories, where wearing apparel was made, the law should in future provide that the temperature should be kept at not less than 60 degrees. The House was probably unaware, as he himself had been until the matter was specially brought to his notice, how large a number of workshops there were in London, such as those where dressmaking was carried on, in which there was no heat of any kind provided for the workers. The women and girls very often arrived at these places in wet clothes; there were no means of drying them, and they carried on their work all through the day without artificial heat of any kind.

*Sir C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): Why limit to clothing factories?

Mr. ASQUITH said, it was so limited in his proposal because it was only in those cases they had evidence that serious evils existed. He thought it would not be desirable to make any hard and fast rules, except where a clear case of necessity was made out; but, of course, if it could be shown that there were other industries in the same condition, he should be very glad to include them. There were also special provisions as to places where arsenic and other poisonous substances were made or used. In future, wherever cases of illness occurred from lead, or arsenic, or phosphorus, or anthrax, it would be the duty of the occupier of the factory to give immediate notice to the inspector or certifying surgeon, and it would be the duty of the medical officer who attended to the case to give notice to the chief inspector in London.

Mr. W. P. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley): Will anthrax include diseases arising from handling wool?

Mr. ASQUITH said, that was what he had in his mind. Then, lastly, they proposed that all the workshops in the country, not only future, but existing, workshops should be registered. It was absolutely essential to the efficient carrying out of the law under this section that annual returns should be made in all factories and workshops of the persons employed and of the particulars as to age and sex. Their proposals, briefly recapitulated, were these:—First, as to factories and workshops, where either the premises were unfit for use or any process or machine was dangerous, the law would make full provision for the safety of the workers, and it would be simpler to apply and easier to enforce. For that purpose they proposed the compulsory registration of accidents and the giving of power to the Secretary of State to make inquiry which would render the evasion of the law more difficult and the hushing up of injuries impossible. As to the outwork, they proposed to prevent the present abuses and ultimately to penalise the giver-out of work if he continued to send it to insanitary places. As to overtime, they had prohibited it altogether for young persons and reduced it for women. As to homework, which was a peculiarly noxious form of overtime, they had prohibited it for children and regulated it for women and young persons, so as to secure that no person protected by the law should work during the 24 hours for a longer time than the law at present permits. As to the new industries, such as laundries, docks, harbours, tenement factories, the construction of buildings and bakehouses, they had brought them for the first time within the scope of the law. They had made special provision for dangerous trades and textile industries; and by providing for the registration of workshops throughout the country, they took the best step they could take to secure the efficient administration of the law. He trusted that this might be regarded as a matter of equal concern to all parties, and when this Bill reached, as he hoped it would, the Second Reading, they would be able to thresh out its details in a practical spirit in one of the Standing Committees upstairs.

SIR J. E. GORST (Cambridge University) said, he did not think, with regard to the age limit, that the Home Secretary had fully stated to the House the obligation entered into at the Berlin Conference. It was five years since that Conference, and although it was quite true that we had entered into no international obligation, yet there was no doubt we pledged ourselves at that Conference to a certain course of action in our domestic Legislation, which it was impossible for us to depart from without incurring a certain amount of just censure and odium. The composition of the British Plenipotentiaries to the Berlin Conference was not in any sense of a Party character. It included men of all political Parties and of great commercial experience — men who represented the employers and the employed, including the hon. Member for Morpeth. The British Plenipotentiaries found that in almost all particulars the factory legislation of this country was of a far more stringent character than that which prevailed in the countries on the Continent, and one of their objects was to persuade those nations to bring up their legislation to our level. But in that general superiority of British factory laws there was one exception — that children in this country were permitted to go to work at a much earlier age than in most European countries. A pledge was unanimously given by the British Plenipotentiaries, however, acting under instructions from the Government, that 12 years should be regarded as the minimum age at which a child should be allowed to work in factories or workshops in England. Under those circumstances he desired to ask the House and the Government whether our national character would not suffer if another Factories and Workshops Bill was passed without any provision in it to raise the age of the work-child to the minimum prescribed by the Conference. He was perfectly aware of the opposition which had ininduced the Home Secretary to abstain from inserting such a provision in this Bill. He greatly regretted that opposition, but it should be pointed out in fairness that at the Conference the textile trades were strongly represented, and that those representatives assented to the pledge to which he had referred. He knew that the Lancashire people had long complained of the unfair competition of the Indian factories, in which child labour was permitted to an extent which was not allowed in this country. He could only say that, in his official position when he was Under Secretary for India, and in his position as a private Member, he had always done his utmost to get the age of the child-workers in India raised, and he should never rest until the benefits which had been extended to English children in this respect were extended to the children of India. It was, no doubt, a deplorable circumstance that, with new industries springing up in India, the Government of India should allow those industries to grow up under conditions which had been found to be intolerable in this country. If the people of Lancashire were so keenly sensitive of unfair competition in India, did it never occur to them that we ourselves were equally subjecting Continental nations to unfair competition by permitting child-labour in our factories at a younger age than was allowed in the textile factories of those countries? He hoped, however, that before long a better frame of mind might be brought about on this question among the textile workers in Lancashire and other parts of the country. And with the idea of reaching some practical result in the matter, if possible, he would readily undertake to introduce a clause dealing with the point before the Bill left the House, and would submit it to the judgment of the House in the same way as the hon. Member for Morpeth submitted a similar clause four years ago. When the clause in the present Factory Act was under discussion the hon. Member appealed to him as a Member of the Government to support it, and he did so. He would now make a similar appeal to the hon. Member for Morpeth to give like support to the clause which he intended to introduce when it came before the House. He trusted they would be able to show the Government that opinion in that House and in the country was so strongly in favour of raising the minimum age of the child-worker that they would feel justified in giving their support to the clause when it was introduced.

*SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury) said, he had heard the statement of the Home Secretary with satisfaction. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on having been able to make that statement, and on having had the opportunity of proposing some further progress in factory legislation. This kind of legislation was not of a humdrum character; it was of practical value, and large numbers would derive benefit from it. There was scarcely any subject more interesting to trace than legislation in reference to labour. Comparing the conditions of textile labour in this country now with those of 60 or 70 years ago, it was impossible not recognise that that legislation had been most valuable and beneficial. But it was desirable to proceed with all such legislation by degrees and with caution, for they could not proceed with it against the opinion of those whom it directly affected and unless backed by public opinion, which had made great progress on those questions since 1891. As to raising the age of the child-worker, the instincts of everyone would be in favour of carrying it out if possible. They must be guided to a great extent in the matter by persons who had direct knowledge of the subject, and among those there was difference of opinion. Moreover, the interests and the necessities of the persons affected must be regarded, and the matter deserved most caeeful consideration. He hoped it would be dealt with in a practical spirit, and yet with all regard to the feelings of humanity. He thanked the right hon. Gentleman for the advance which was to be made in respect of the "particulars" clause of the existing Act. It was said in 1891 that if the manufacturer was forced to give particulars he would have to disclose the secrets of his trade to his rivals, and that his business would thereby be imperilled. But none of these fears had been realised. No instance had been mentioned of injury caused by the disclosure of the facts known as "particulars." By extending the benefit of the clause to all textile trades and by making it more definite great good would, in his opinion, be effected. The proposal for automatic registers would, he thought, be accepted by both employers and employed. The provisions of the Cotton Factories Act of 1889 with regard to temperature and humidity in sheds had proved to be defective in some respects. It was true that the Home Secretary had a power to alter the conditions of atmosphere and humidity in any given place to which the Act applied, but he did not think that the right hon. Gentleman had exercised the power. [Mr. Asquith indicated that he had.] Then the right hon. Gentleman had not exercised it to such an extent as to give general satisfaction. The application of the power was most urgently needed in places where a great amount of sizing took place. He was therefore glad to know that this question was to be further dealt with.

*MR. HENRY MATTHEWS (Birmingham, E.) said, that when he was at the Home Office his advisers warned him against any attempt to lay down a statutory definition of overcrowding. What would be gross overcrowding in a workshop in a town might not be overcrowding at all in a village workshop which enjoyed an abundance of air. To lay down a hard-and-fast rule on the subject was therefore thought formerly not to be quite wise. He doubted whether it would be expedient to entrust to Courts of Summary Jurisdiction cases involving the question whether particular premises or machines were dangerous to be used. Questions of that kind were rather technical, and he thought that they could be dealt with better in the way of administration than in the way of judicial proceeding. He also had some hesitation about accepting the change which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to make in respect of overtime.

The clauses against overtime in the Act of 1878 were settled after a full and most elaborate inquiry into the conditions of almost every trade in the country, and were adapted carefully to the wants of different trades. Where was the evidence justifying an alteration in those provisions? As to the age at which children ought to be allowed to work, he agreed with what had been said by the Home Secretary. It would be very injudicious to handicap factory and workshop children as compared with other children. If the age at which a child was allowed to earn his own living by work was to be altered it ought to be altered for all industries, and not for some only. The large step which the Home Secretary proposed to take in the direction of extending factory legislation not merely to industries for the manufacture of products for sale, but to all industries, was a very great innovation, which might lead them further than they intended to go. If they brought under the Factory Acts an industry like the laundry industry, where could they stop? They might have to extend the law next to domestic service and field labour. There were, of course, clauses in the Factory Acts that might be applied to all industries without mischief, but he doubted whether the provisions as to regular hours and fixed times for meals could be universally applied. The sanitary clauses of the Act of 1891 already applied to laundries, and, no doubt, that was beneficial, but he was not sure that a further application of the Act to those places would be wise. The work in a laundry was necessarily unequal. In a cotton mill the flow of work was perfectly regular, and it could be confined within given limits; but in a laundry, especially in the country, the work was often necessarily crowded into three or four days in the week. Instead of applying the Factory and Workshop Acts *en bloc* to an industry such as that, they would do better to select for application particular and suitable provisions for preventing danger from machinery or overwork. There was another large class of laundries with regard to which they would be bound closely to watch the provisions of the Bill—he meant convent laundries, which were carried on in this country and very largely in Ireland. With regard to special provisions, he had always felt that to prevent a workman from being able to ascertain for himself what wages ought to be paid was a fraudulent thing on the part of the employer, and that at whatever risk, almost, Parliament ought to compel this information to be furnished; and accordingly he should be glad to extend the scope of the particulars clause, at present limited to weavers, winders, and reelers in the cotton industry, to other classes if they had not under the existing Act been able to obtain particulars. He should raise no objection to extending Section 8 of the Act of 1891, relating to dangerous trades, in the manner the right hon. Gentleman had indicated; but it seemed to him there would be difficulty, and perhaps danger, in the application of the large powers which the right hon. Gentleman had asked for. For instance, under the power to prohibit the employment of certain classes of persons in certain employments, the influence of a Trade Union might be brought to bear to prohibit the employment of women in certain classes of work, although there was no reason to think those employments were in themselves either dangerous or undesirable. So long as the right hon. Gentleman was at the Home Office he should have confidence that the section would be used in a proper way. Section 8 had not, perhaps, been used so largely as it might be. His own intention when the clause was drawn was, that it should cover, for example, dangerous conditions arising from excessive humidity. The value of the section was, that it was elastic, and enabled any regulation made under it, as applied to a particular industry which experience proved to be inexpedient or unwise, to be altered without going to the House of Commons and going through the elaborate machinery of a Bill. As to the returns to be made to the Home Office, he was afraid the unhappy owner of a factory or workshop was somewhat overburdened already with returns, and that any additional duty imposed in this way would lead to the work being done loosely and inaccurately. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on having introduced a Bill which would be beneficial and useful, and assured him that, on the Opposition side of the House, he would deal with the question of underground bakehouses, but if he could do so all sides, and particularly London Members, would rejoice at it, and give him their help. He might mention that 96 per cent. of the bakehouses were underground in many London districts. These underground bakehouses should be abolished as soon as it was practicable to carry out such a reform. Then where baking was done continuously, there should be a system of working by shifts, there being, say, two or three shifts. He should like to say a word or two on tenement workshops. He happened to have worked for some years himself in a tenement workshop in High Holborn. It was, he thought, an instance of many tenement workshops that existed in Birmingham and the Midlands. He trusted that rigorous steps would be taken against the men who in tenement workshops frequently had two or three boys and one or two girls at work, and who were able to impose upon his own children conditions of toil and ventilation that no Act of Parliament would allow an employer to impose upon other men's children in a large factory. The Home Secretary did not refer to the nail and chain-making trades. He had witnessed the moral and physical degradation to which girls and boys engaged in nail and chain making were subjected, by the frightful conditions which prevailed, and he believed that if the right hon. Gentleman would at once raise the age to 14 at which boys or girls should be allowed to enter a nail and chain factory, the whole of the adult operatives in the Black Country would bless him. There was one point on which he must press the Home Secretary, and it was whether he would provide in the Bill for what was known as continuous working at dangerous or semi-dangerous trades. Gasworks owned by municipalities, and at which continuous work was carried on, had voluntarily and partly through the pressure of organised public opinion, adopted eight-hour shifts. Such was the case with sewage works, similarly conducted, and he was glad to see that many chemical manufacturers had adopted the system of an eight-hour shift. That system had been generally adopted by railway companies with regard to signalmen, and he could not understand why it should not be compulsorily imposed upon every manufacturer engaged in a dangerous trade. If the Home Secretary had any difficulty in meeting the bogie of foreign competition, the best thing he could do was to say:—

> "Well, gentlemen, we recognise the objection that foreign competition must be considered, and as a means of getting out of the difficulty we will at once convoke an international conference to see whether the Governments of all the countries of Europe cannot make up their minds as to an international maximum working day for dangerous industries, with a view to adopting a general reduction of hours."

There was just one other point he had to touch upon. The right hon. and learned gentleman, the Member for Bury, at the outset of his speech made a few remarks which were eminently Lancastrian in their object. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said, of course, the House sympathised with every attempt to raise the age at which child labour should commence. They all agreed with it, and the operatives agreed with it, but it was a difficult question and must be carefully interfered with; why carefully?—not out of respect to the parents. Unfortunately the working-class children had been too frequently the victims of their own mothers' and fathers' selfishness and ignorance, and in many parts had been sacrificed to the drunken and dirty habits of their parents. He trusted the Home Secretary would recognise that fact. The hon. and learned Member for Bury said there were two sides to the question. There were two sides, the human and the inhuman side, and he believed no man who demanded that children under 14 years of age should go to work had ever in his own person as a lad of 9 or 10 years of age realised the difficulty and the disadvantage of getting up at half-past four on a winter's morning, taking the train or walking through the streets, possibly wearing bad boots, starting work at six, leaving off at five or five thirty at night, and then rushing home, and attending night school. It only too frequently happened that in this way a child debilitated for ever his physical constitution. It seemed to him a mockery to talk about solutions of the unemployed question when we allowed children of tender years to work, and there were unemployed hundreds and thousands of lads and girls over 18 years of age willing and capable to do work. He would raise the age of child labour and withdraw from the labour market that infantile competition adult labour was subjected to. Why they should hesitate to abolish half-time labour right off the reel he did not know: why they should hesitate to raise the age to 14, at which children should be allowed to work he could not understand; but of 172,000 half-timers, 153,000 were employed in four districts—in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and two other districts. There were only a few hundreds in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield, and other big cities. Let the Home Secretary take the bull by the horns, let him deal with half-timers as Lord Ashley in the other House dealt with the factory question 30 or 40 years ago. If the right hon. Gentleman did away with half-timers he would have on his side the whole of the schoolmasters, all the men who were anxious to solve the unemployed problem, and every one who realised what a danger it was to England that children should be sent into the workshop at the early age at which they were now sent. He hoped the Home secretary would stiffen his Bill, for if he did that he would add another testimony to the good work he had done since he had been in office, not the least piece of which was the introduction of this generally admirable Bill.

*MR. OLDROYD (Dewsbury) thanked the Home Secretary for the very clear way in which he introduced the Bill, and expressed his intense satisfaction that the right hon. Gentleman had been able to take up so complicated and difficult a question. The Bill, so far as one could at present judge, seemed to have been conceived in a liberal spirit, and if it it became law it would ensure the application of the factory and workshop regulations to a larger number of industries than they had ever been applied to before. The measure would give further relief to children and young people engaged in different trades from the pressure of long hours—indeed it would certainly bring about an improved condition of things in factories and workshops generally. Considerable reference had been made in the course of the Debate to the question of the employment of short-timers. He had always been an advocate of the abolition of short-timers, for he believed that half time labour was deleterious to the health of children, and was conducive to the deterioration of the race. He did not merely entertain theoretical opinions on the matter, he carried his opinions into practice. The firm with which he was connected had during the last 40 years, and he believed for a longer period, rigorously excluded from their works all half-timers. With regard to the question of the age limit for children he would not enter into the point raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University as to whether the honour of the nation would be sullied if the House were to pass Factory Legislation without dealing with the matter; but he was glad that on the last occasion the subject was before Parliament they were able at all events to advance the limit from 10 to 11 years. At that time he advocated an advance to 12 years, and he regretted it was not done; and if the Home Secretary substituted 12 for 11 in the present Bill he would most heartily support the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Birmingham referred to the point of submitting to the decision of a court of summary jurisdiction the question as to what machinery was or was not of a dangerous character. He felt there was some possibility of a difficulty arising as to the various and conflicting decisions that would be given by these Courts on the point; and that there was a danger also that the decisions of the magistrates might in some cases be prejudiced by self-interest; still he thought it better to leave the question to some such authority rather than to the sole arbitrament of the factory Inspector. He was gratified with the way in which the Home Secretary proposed to deal with "the particulars" clause, in his Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury referred to the clause, and expressed his satisfaction that it was to be more severe and rigid than the clause in the Act of 1891. He was aware that there had been considerable difficulty in the administration of that clause; and he would like to know from the Home Secretary whether there was any provision in the Bill to prevent certain cases of evasion which he had in his mind. It was found in several cases which had arisen under the operation of the clause that particulars had been given in conformity with the Statute, but the work that had been done was not in conformity with the particulars. In weaving, weight of cloth was determined by the number of picks per inch put into the loom. Cases had come into court in which, for instance, 30 picks per inch were put into the particulars, the wages being based on the number of picks. But it was found that 35 picks were put into the loom, though the particulars gave the number as 30, and the magistrates refused to convict on the ground that the additional number of picks were put in by accident rather than by design. To this decision the magistrates were led by the plea of the manufacturer that the putting in of the additional picks entailed a greater loss to him—by giving more weight than was required in the cloth—than the small saving in wages secured by paying for 30 picks instead of for 35 picks. But it was shown in one case that the additional number of picks were put in by design; that 35 picks per inch were required in the cloth, and that by collusion between the manufacturer and the manager 35 picks were really put in, though the number was given as 30 in the particulars. In that case the maximum penalty was imposed, but in other cases the manufacturers got off on the plea that the additional number of picks got in through inadvertence, and that they, therefore, really suffered, though there was a strong presumption that the greater weight of cloth was intended, and thus the workers were defrauded of their earnings to the extent of 10 or 15 per cent. He hoped the present Bill would provide effective machinery for stopping those frauds on the workers. With regard to tenement workshops, he very much appeciated the remarks of the hon. Member for Battersea; and he trusted that when the Bill was printed it would be found to contain effective provisions for punishing those persons, who under the cloak of the home employment of their own children were able to avail themselves of child labour and thus compete at an advantage with others engaged in the same industry in larger workshops which came under the operation of the Factory Acts. He hoped the stringency of the Bill would be such that when it became law there would be no more evasions of the intention of the Legislature to reduce the amount of child labour to reasonable limits. The general consensus of opinion favourable to the Bill which had found expression during the Debate might be accepted as a sufficient guarantee that the Bill would be received with warm approval by the country.

*MR. C. B. STUART-WORTLEY said, that in bringing forward this Amendment of the Factory Act, within four years of the passing of the Act of 1891, making the third Amendment of the Factory Laws during the past six years, the Home Secretary had very wisely refrained from uttering any disparagements of previous attempts at Legislation on the subject. The true reason for the introduction of the Bill was, as the right hon. Gentleman had said, that we have to be constantly bringing legislation up to the rising standard of safety. He confirmed what had been said by previous speakers that the Home Secretary had wisely used his opportunities in evolving from the country's stores of accumulated experience a large and generous measure which would be a valuable acquisition to our social Legislation. He desired to know, with regard to the requirements of cubic space for the purposes of health, whether the clause applied to existing factories or only to new factories. With regard to the age limit for children it had been said that the opposition to it sprang entirely from selfish motives, and that the elements of progress and education were in favour of it. That was not the case, because he had a very vivid recollection of the passing of the Act of 1891, and he remembered that one of the weightiest communications received by the then Home Secretary was from the School Board of Bradford, which urged very strongly that the age should not be raised at all. Bradford was not a Conservative town, Bradford was not an unenlightened place, and it was not a place otherwise than devoted to the interests of education. It had stood in the forefront of progress in matters of technical education, having been one of the first towns to found a great technical college, and yet it was found among those who sent the most urgent petitions to the Home Secretary against the raising of the age. For himself he was bound to say that, not coming from Lancashire, and not representing a constituency from which he received any kind of pressure in either direction, he was perfectly free to vote, and always should vote, in favour of any restriction of child labour which did not seem to him to interfere with the general prosperity of the country, and was not opposed by any large section of the people. But the discussion that day was an instructive commentary on the heroics that were indulged in in 1891, and it was interesting to remember all the strong things that were said upon that occasion as to not raising the age from 10 to 12, and to remember at the same time the shrinkings that took place when it was proposed as a result of the sudden and unexpected victory of the then minority to translate into actual execution the proposals that had been demanded—demanded in such loud tones, and such hyperbolic language As regarded overtime, the right hon. Gentleman proposed considerable changes. His right hon. Friend (Mr. H. Matthews) reminded the House that the existing provisions for overtime followed upon an extremely minute and careful inquiry. He was speaking of the famous Royal Commission upon which the Factory Act of 1878 was founded. What they wanted to understand before they got into Committee on this Bill was whether these similar provisions had been founded on a similarly exhaustive inquiry, and were not likely to be objected to or to be worse or more detrimental to trade than were the provisions of 1878. The Home Secretary was a little hard on Sheffield and upon that honest industry which was practised at the grindstone. They knew that the grindstone was a dangerous machine, liable to have hidden defects, and to fly to pieces suddenly, scattering death in many directions. But the grindstone was not the only machine which was capable of becoming dangerous. This was not the only machinery in which there was a danger that what might be called the equipment of the industry might be so starved as to constitute a daily and hourly danger to the workpeople engaged.

MR. ASQUITH: The provision applies to all dangerous machines.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY said that if it applied to all dangerous machines, he thought it a very good provision. Section 8 of the Act of 1891 would probably have been applied to the grindstones had it not been discovered since it passed that owing to the grindstones being generally in places where there was practically no occupier, or at least only an occupier against whom it was no use to proceed, Section 8 of that Act was useless for that purpose. For that reason he wished to know how far the Home Secretary in extending Section 8 of the Act of 1891 was going to make it applicable to the case of the tenement factories. If he did make it applicable to them he would be making an extremely useful extension of the Factory Act. In the case of outworkers there were two or three things the House would have to be careful of. Was this a campaign against female labour? Was it an attempt to restrict the supply of labour? In either case he believed the House would only proceed in the direction to which it was invited with the utmost care and considerable hesitation. He believed that the purpose of the Home Secretary's provisions was at all events ostensibly to secure the sanitary surroundings of the places where the out-workers were employed. They had an authority already responsible for these sanitary surroundings, namely, the Local Sanitary Authority, and he should have thought the better policy would be to increase and stiffen the responsibility of the local Sanitary Authority. If they laid parallel and concurrent responsibility upon the occupier of some other place, which might not be situated in the district of that Sanitary Authority, they would do very much to undermine that responsibility which everyone would seek to enforce. As regarded home work, was that a campaign of the same kind? They knew of many excellent persons who were engaged in doing their utmost to restore and revive what were called cottage industries. Were they to continue to be allowed, because the persons engaged in those industries did not spend any portion of the day in a factory or workshop? Again, how were they to enforce the provision against home work; because it would be a serious step indeed if they were to make practically the private house of a person, who is neither the occupier of a factory nor the conductor of a workshop, for the first time liable to the inspection of the Factory Inspector. He hoped that the new requirements as to statistics and notices would be such as would secure uniformity in the various industries of the country. As regards the dangerous trades to which it was proposed to extend Section 8 of the Act of 1891, it might be a right thing to prohibit the employment of women or children by the executive power, but when that section was drawn up they had regard to the fact that Parliament would prefer—and he should believe Parliament would prefer — that if the labour of any particular class was to be interfered with, it should be done, not by executive action, but rather by the authority of Parliament itself. Section 8 of the Act of 1891 was intended to enable the Minister of the day to bring up the regulation requirements as regards machinery and processes to the best and latest standard of efficiency and protection. He would conclude by saying what he once before had occasion to remark, that the Home Secretary presided over what was, after all, the real Labour Department of the country, and they would see in every clause and line of this proposed Statute a much more active interference with, and regulation of, a larger number of industries, and a much greater amount of excellent public work done or proposed to be done, than they saw or ever would see in the essay-writing and statistic-collecting bureau in another place. He felt sure the House would do its utmost to assist the passing of this Bill.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar), thought the Home Secretary might well congratulate himself on the cordial reception of his Bill by all sections of the House. Both the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Gentleman on the front Opposition Bench had referred to the question of overtime, and had deprecated the idea of dealing with the matter, chiefly on the ground that a Royal Commission came to certain conclusions which were embodied in the Act of 1878. But public opinion had advanced very considerably in the last twenty years, and everyone admitted—though they might not go to the full extent of desiring that overtime should be prohibited—that public feeling had certainly come to the conclusion that further steps ought to be taken in the direction indicated in the Bill. And the intention was in the future to prohibit young persons being employed on overtime at all, and in the case of women to limit the number of days and number of hours during which they might work overtime during the year. Information in the possession of the Home Office went to show that while in some cases the existing powers were abused, it might be taken as a general rule that they were not exercised to the full extent. That was a strong argument in favour of limiting the powers where it showed that they were used and abused by the worst employers, while they were not used at all by the good employers. In answer to the hon. Member for Sheffield, he said it was distinctly provided in the Bill that the overtime worked by women was limited to a certain number of hours, whether the work was done at home or in the factory. The hon. Member for Sheffield asked whether the provision in regard to overcrowding applied to existing factories. Certainly, and the reason for introducing it was that it had been the general rule of the Department to treat 250 cubic feet as a minimum; and it was thought better if that had been the rule of the Department, that it should be made the absolute minimum, not only for existing factories, but also for workshops throughout the country. He attached very great importance to the step proposed to be taken in the Bill to deal with the question of outworkers. The hon. Member for Battersea said they ought to abolish out work, but that could hardly be done at the present time. There was no attempt to abolish home work, but what they wanted to do was to improve the conditions under which that work was carried on, and to bring the worst class of places up to a better sanitary standard, so that better conditions would surround the workmen. They did not, however, see their way to abolish it altogether. The hon. Member for Sheffield seemed to think that this might be applied to the abolition of cottage industries, but it must be recollected that provisions of the Bill would apply to special classes of work only Although some few persons might suffer from these proposals, yet he believed that the general bulk of the working classes, and those engaged in particular industries, would derive great benefit from them. At any rate, their condition in the East End of London would be greatly improved. The right hon. Member for East Birmingham said that he was in favour of the registration of workshops, because it would provide more statistical knowledge on this subject; but under this Bill there would come under the supervision of the inspectors a very large percentage which hitherto had escaped their attentions. Of course every care would be taken in the application of the new conditions, and he assured the right hon. Gentleman that the Bill would not in any degree injure the laundry trade. With regard to the Docks, they would be brought under the Factory Law as regarded the reporting of accidents and the general system of tactory inspection, but the question of hours would not apply because they employed no women or young children. Then there was the point which had been raised about half-time employment. On general principles they were strongly in favour of raising the age, but whether that should be in the Bill or not was a matter of expediency—whether they should risk the danger of losing the Bill, which contained many admirable provisions, by inserting a proposal which might lead to considerable opposition. They were gratified to find a desire that this particular provision be inserted, and if there was a consensus of opinion in its favour he had no doubt the Government, which was entirely in the hands of the House in this matter, would have no objection to its insertion, provided, of course, that it would not interfere with the passing of the Bill.

MR. E. F. VESEY KNOX (Cavan, W.) said, he wished to make one or two remarks with regard to the industries of the North of Ireland. He felt sure the operatives in that part of Ireland would feel indebted to the right hon. Gentleman for the advantage which they would derive from this Bill. But there was one thing in it which might give rise to some misapprehension. As he understood the Bill, it proposed to give the Secretary of State power to prohibit the employwent of women and children in dangerous trades. The linen industry had been scheduled as a dangerous trade, and he wished to know whether the Executive was to have the power of enforcing in one department of the textile industry stricter regulations than prevailed in the others. No doubt the Bill would remove many of the dangers to which the workers were now exposed, and while both employers and employed in the North of England would welcome the enforcement of stricter sanitary regulations in the linen mills, yet he thought they might have some objection to the Executive possessing the power of prohibiting the employment of women and children in a manufacture in which they were so much more largely engaged than men.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston), in referring to the practise of sweating, said that one of the worst offenders in that respect was a Department of the State—namely, certain departments of the War Office. The Government Departments ought to set an example in this respect, and he hoped that they would be placed on the same footing as any other factory, and liable to the same inspections. These regulations, however, would have to be carried out very carefully or they would have a tendency to drive work out of the country, for while the right hon. Gentleman might exercise a judicious control over the work which was sent out of the factories, he did not quite see how he could exercise such control as would prevent work being sent out to foreign countries. That was where they would find the real danger. He knew, as a matter of fact, that a great deal of work had been sent out of the country and was carried on in sweating dens in France, and practically done by prisoners in French gaols, who had been hired out by contractors. The right hon. Gentleman who had last spoken had referred to a consensus of opinion that the age of children ought to be raised; but he hoped the Bill would not be wrecked by trying to make any change of that kind. If that were done it would overweight the Bill and place more in it than it could carry. The hon. Member for

Battersea had spoken somewhat violently upon this subject, but he seemed to be guided not so much by the humanitarian point of view, as by the competition between child and adult labour. It was hardly fair to Lancashire operatives, who had to contend with Indian mills and import duties laid upon Lancashire goods, to lay an additional burden upon Lancashire labour; but it would be very different if one suggestion that had been made could be carried out, and if you could establish throughout the Continent one set of hours, and, still more, if you could bring about a rise of wages among operatives abroad. The competition would then cease to be as unfair as it is, and Lancashire operatives would be willing to raise the age of the children employed. In these days a good deal was said in favour of technical instruction as against book-learning; and it was about the best technical training you could give to get the children set to work. [*A laugh.*] He expected that laugh; but surely it was about the best way in which you could give technical training. It might be that there was a good deal of physical deterioration in manufacturing towns, but it was largely due to other causes than half-time employment; and as to the age of employment, great advances had been made in raising it from eight to nine, and then from nine to eleven. The temperature of mills he believed to be one of the smallest of the causes operating to the detriment of the workers. He heartily wished the Home Secretary success in carrying the Bill.

Mr. S. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince) congratulated the Home Secretary in producing an excellent Bill, the details of which would gladden the hearts of thousands of workers. As to the extended application of the particulars clause, he knew of a factory in which there were 500 female workers; their weekly wages for the same work varied from 14s. or 16s. to 8s. or 9s.; and yet, if they made any inquiries, they would endanger their employment. There ought to be printed statements showing what they would receive for their work. The registration of workshops and factories would be a good departure. There had been a great outcry against what is known as sweating, and the revelations of the inspectors, especially of female inspectors, showed the enormous extent to which it was carried on. Registration was a step in the right direction, because it would enable sweating to be discerned and a remedy applied. He was pleased with the unanimity with which the Home Secretary's statement had been received, and glad that the Bill was not to be discussed from a Party point of view. He hoped that in Committee hon. Members would give all the aid suggested by their experience to make the Bill valuable for the protection of the working classes.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, he had understood the hon. and learned Gentleman below him (Sir J. Gorst) to say that the restrictions and limitations upon certain classes of labour were not equal as between Lancashire and Bombay. We knew that the competition between these two parts of the British Empire was very keen, and if that competition was to be fair, surely the limitations and restrictions upon labour ought to be equal also. If there were restrictions here which did not exist in India, the sooner Her Majesty's Government took up the question of equalisation the better. When he was Governor of Bombay he took up the question of the limitation of labour under certain conditions. Although he did not stay long enough to see very much accomplished, yet since his time he supposed some progress must have been made. His right hon. and learned Friend now said that something had been done by his successors, but possibly they had not done enough, and something more could be done in the way of equalisation. If so, he was sure that the able Secretary for India would not fail to take the matter up.

Bill presented accordingly and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Friday next, and to be printed. [Bill 153.]

TRUCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, in asking for leave to introduce a Bill to Amend the Truck Acts, said the House was aware there was a great feeling of grievance among the working classes as regarded deductions from their wages in respect of fines, materials, tools, and matters of that kind. Although, from the information he had received, he did not think it would be possible to make all deductions of every kind illegal, because there were some trades in which it was necessary and even to the advantage of the workpeople, that they should be able to buy materials or tools from employers, yet he was satisfied that the existing state of things did impose hardships very ne rly to extortion, and in his judgment some remedy ought to be provided. It was proposed to provide that for the future a contract between a workman and an employer for any deduction from wages, whether for fines, materials, tools, machines, standing-room, or other matters of that kind, should be illegal and unenforceable except under two conditions. The first was that there should be a contract in writing, signed by the workman; and the second, which was much more important, was that the contract should be held to be reasonable in all the circumstances of the case. Thus, if a poor woman employed in needlework were obliged to pay an employer for needles and thread higher prices than those at which they could be bought at a retail shop in the neighbourhood, their cases might at once be brought before a magistrate, and it would be held that the charges were unreasonable and therefore illegal. But it would not be satisfactory to leave workmen or workwomen to seek their own remedy. They were too poor, and unorganised trades too dependent, and the penalties even of success, let alone of failure, would be too grievous. Therefore it was thought better and desirable to extend the provisions of the Truck Act of 1887, and to make it the duty of the inspectors of factories and workshops, when cases of this kind were brought to their notice, to take them before the magistrates. These were the main provisions of the Bill. There was another to the effect that no payment of this kind, or anything in the nature of Truck, however reasonable, was to be authorised or allowed unless particulars in writing were supplied to the workman or workwoman at the time when the contract was made. The Bill was printed and would be circulated at once.

*MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) thought that the Bill would probably meet the mischiefs which appeared to exist in a few cases. But the House must be careful not to carry it too far. An instance came under his notice the other day where it was discovered that there had been some tools which workmen had been obliged to pay a very high price for sharpening; and it appeared that, if this work was allowed to be done by the employers, the work could be more efficiently undertaken and at a much less cost. It was therefore in the interest of the workmen not to prohibit such a transaction.

Bill presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Friday next, and to be printed. [Bill 154.]

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; Bill read the third time, and passed.

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading upon Monday next read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn, and leave given to present another Bill instead thereof.

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND) (No. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Hayden, Bill to amend the Grand Jury (Ireland) Laws. Bill presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 155.]

STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

Sir G. O. Morgan reported from the Chairmen's Panel: That they had appointed Sir Julian Goldsmid to act as Chairman of the Standing Committee for the consideration of Bills relating to Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures; and that they had appointed Sir George Osborne Morgan to act as Chairman of the Standing Committeee for the consideration of Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Sitting suspended at five minutes before Seven o'Clock.

EVENING SITTING.

The Sitting was resumed at Nine of the Clock.

THE POST OFFICE AND NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY.

Supply—Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Mr. J. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) proposed—

> "to leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'a Select Committee be appointed to consider the proposed draft agreement between the Postmaster General and the National Telephone Company, and report with reference to the monopoly which may thereby be created; the granting of telephone licences to municipalities; and generally on the future policy of the Post Office with reference to the extension of the telephone service.'"

Having expressed regret that the Postmaster General could leave to the accident of the ballot and the energy of a private Member the provision of an opportunity for discussing this important matter, the hon. Member said the agreement in question grew out of a policy which was declared in March, 1892, by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. The desire was to make the telephone service more useful in the country, and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer said—

> "The trunk lines will be taken over by the Government, leaving to the localities the working of the local exchanges. If this is done, I believe the public will be better served than if the Government take over the whole business, because there will be a competition in the localities to serve the public as well as it can be served."

The right hon. Gentleman further said the local authorities might be willing to undertake the telephone business themselves, and he saw nothing contrary to the Government policy in such a proposal. In a Treasury Minute of 23rd May it was said—

> "the intention is to meet, as far as possible, the views of municipal authorities."

The next step was the Telegraphs Bill, which was introduced in May and rushed through the House by June. The London County Council protested against the haste in passing that Bill, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for London University asked that the reference to the Committee should contain the important words "and send for persons, papers, and records." Unfortunately those words were omitted, but the Select Committee, which consisted of two representatives of the Post Office and three representatives of the telephone companies, were evidently conscious of the omission, because in their report they said—

> "All the arrangements must rest with the Government, but the Committee think that the agreement should be laid before Parliament."

The heads of the arrangements were initialled on 11th August, 1892, and he was very anxious the House should regard them as merely a provisional document and as in no sense a binding document. Although inquiries were made for it, hon. Members had not the privilege of seeing the document until 1894, and when it was produced with the agreement in the midst of the holidays, when it was impossible for municipal authorities in the House to express an opinion. The agreement was only deferred after considerable pressure had been brought upon the Government. It was a very serious document, because it brought them face to face with a new and unrestricted monopoly which, in regard to the telephone service, meant increased charges, the killing of competition, the death of municipalised telephones, a vexatious interference with public rights, and, what was more important than all, the prospect of paying through the nose in 17 years' time for a gigantic property. The Postmaster General told a deputation of the London County Council that he regarded the agreement as a sealed and settled document; he said it was solemnly signed and could not be departed from. In reply to a deputation from the Association of municipal corporations, the right hon. Gentleman said that new conditions could not now be imposed on the Telephone Company. He submitted that the draft agreement could not be regarded in any such light. In the first instance it was an agreement between three parties—the Post Office, the National Telephone Company, and the New Telephone Company—and what happened between the signing of the heads of arrangement and the presentation of the draft agreement to the House? The National Telephone Company absorbed the New Telephone Company, and thus the monopoly was created. He was certain that if the Committee which considered the question had been face to face with one company no such heads of arrangement would have been sanctioned, and he asserted that a company which endeavoured to get behind a Committee of the House of Commons by secretly buying up an opposition company was not entitled to any consideration at the hands of the House. It was perfectly ridiculous to regard the document as a solemn document when one of the parties to the agreement acted in such an extraordinary and improper manner. If the document was of the settled and sacred nature which the Postmaster General seemed to think it was, why was it not placed on the Table of the House in 1892, so that the municipalities might have an early opportunity of considering it. It was perfectly competent for the House to regard the document merely as a provisional arrangement, and he submitted that the subsequent action of the National Telephone Company deprived the heads of the arrangement of anything in the nature of a sealed and settled contract. The Postmaster General seemed to strongly deprecate competition. It was a very inconvenient thing to have two or three exchanges in any town or city, but it must be evident to the House that competition was the only protection the public had against high charges, and that if competition disappeared they must have clauses as to maximum charges, as to the limitation of dividends, as to the obligation of supply. In this case they had nothing of the kind. What was a very unfortunate feature of the case was, that the Post Office and the National Telephone Company had gone into partnership in a monopoly of a most objectionable kind. He thought it was a very important point in this question that they should know how much the public had to pay for the luxury of allowing the Post Office to be associated with the National Telephone Company. The hon. Member then quoted the figures, showing the increased charges under the new arrangement with regard to long and short distances, and pointed out that the great bulk of the business—75 per cent.—had to do with the shorter and not longer distances. In Sweden the charges were much lower than here, and surely they could do in a country like England what was done in Sweden. What was proposed to be charged £10 to £20 in London was done in Manchester for £6 and in Stockholm for £4. The question which immediately concerned him was the charge in London. Other Members could speak for other parts of the country, but for London this was a matter of great importance. One-seventh of the business of the Company emanated from the Metropolis. The County Council looked on this as so grave a matter that they came to the conclusion that, as far as the local service was concerned, they could secure a much better service than that rendered by the National Telephone Company at half the price. If they looked on that entirely with regard to subscriptions it meant a saving of £50,000 a year. No wonder the County Council regarded the matter as one of great importance. They considered that the service was a disgrace to the country, and that it was due to this fact that comparatively few persons bothered with the Telephone Company. It was not, however, so much a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence as a matter of going back upon great principles. Some of them believed that municipalities worthy of the name should own and control enterprises having anything to do with the breaking up or the using of the streets. It was incredible that a new monopoly should be entertained for a moment. The telephone system might become not only a luxury, but as great a boon as the penny post itself. He should submit once more the proposition with which he started. He had said that this proposed agreement was distinctly contrary to the policy of the Government. Municipalities had not had an opportunity of considering it. He submitted that the agreement could not be regarded as validly and that it was wholly prejudicial to the best interests of the people at large. He knew it was difficult for those on the Front Benches to conceive such a position, but this was just one of those occasions on which private Members might come to the rescue of the Front Benches. It was the duty of private Members who had an interest in municipalities to go into the Lobby in support of his Motion in order that this matter might be thoroughly considered, and one of the greatest monopolies ever proposed inquired into. The hon. Member concluded by moving his Resolution.

CAPTAIN J. F. BAGOT (Westmorland, Kendal) in seconding the Motion, said, that in this matter they were behind every other country in the world. The development of the telephone in comparison with commerce was almost at a standstill, and the agreement which was being that night considered was looked upon with almost universal dissatisfaction by, he thought he might say, all their large towns and municipalities. Competition was entirely debarred and a gigantic monopoly was established. The Postmaster General stated that it was very desirable that there should be no competition, and that it would be rather disadvantageous to the best interests of the telephone service. Surely the objections raised might very easily be obviated? He thought there was good cause for not looking upon the present agreement as similar to that made by the late Government three years ago. In the first place the position of affairs since that time had entirely changed. In the second place, the terms of the present draft agreement seemed to go beyond the Treasury minute, and they also seemed to go beyond the information which was given to Parliament by the responsible Ministers at that time. With regard to the first point, when the Postmaster General and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the late Government settled this question with the Telephone companies, there were two groups of companies in existence, and they held several licences. Since that time, the National Telephone Company had bought up and acquired all the others, and consequently had an entire monopoly. This made the present position entirely different from that of three years ago. With regard to the second point, that was that the present policy which was to be carried out by the Postmaster General differed in a very material respect from the policy of the Ministers who made the arrangement three years ago. He would like to quote what was said on this subject of competition by the late Postmaster General. Speaking on March 22, 1892, he said :—

> "Wherever the Local Authorities are satisfied that a Telephone Exchange is desirable in their area, and the Government is satisfied that the licensees are in a position to carry out the undertaking, and that it is in the public interest desirable that they should have a licence, then it will be granted for that area."

That was the policy of the late Postmaster General, and to that the policy of the present Postmaster General was diametrically opposed. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Blackpool, speaking a few days afterwards, on March 29, said :—

> "It is because these Companies have amalgamated, and make no competition worthy of the name, that the establishment of a different system has become necessary, and the Government have intervened to secure the development of the system of exchanges and the connections with the trunk lines. There is no reason why new companies should not be formed to create new exchanges. I have not the least doubt that in a very short time we shall hear of the establishment of new companies and new exchanges. * * * I know of two or three which are only waiting for the settlement of this policy to start."

The hon. member for the Tower Hamlets had quoted a statement, which entirely carried out the quotations he had given, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the late Government, who most distinctly said that there was nothing contrary to the Government policy in the suggestion made in the course of the discussion, that the Local Authorities might be willing to undertake the telephone business themselves. He thought those quotations distinctly showed, in the first place, that it was intended by the late Government, when they formulated this agreement, that free competition was desirable in the public interest, and that it should be carried out. They also showed that private Companies and Local Authorities should be granted licences, subject to the terms of the Treasury minute, and that the Postmaster General was determined to re-create competition where it did not exist. That, he contended, was a policy entirely different from what they understood to be the policy of the present

Postmaster General. There was no doubt that, under the present agreement, if carried into law, a gigantic monopoly would be established. They had been told that this was a rich man's question. The Postmaster General had said so in answer to a deputation from the County Council, and he appeared to think that the only people who used the telephone were those who could afford to pay for licences. That did not appear to be a very good argument. He thought that a question which was, undoubtedly, of the very greatest commercial interest, could not, in any sense, be looked upon as merely a rich man's question. Every working man and every poor man was surely just as much interested in every thing that affected the commercial supremacy of the country as a rich man. So far as the country was concerned, this question was of supreme importance. Anybody who had lived in America or Canada would know that almost every house was connected by telephone with the nearest country town, and he was perfectly certain that, in these days, when there was a great deal of depression in trade and agriculture, and when trade was said to be going out of the country towns, largely owing to the parcel post, which made it easy to send to London for an article, such communication was very necessary, and would be the cause of much more business being done in the country towns. At this time of day, when it was the universal opinion of the country that large private monopolies should not be allowed, it did seem to him that for the Government deliberately to create a new and important private monopoly, was a policy which he could not describe as anything but disastrous.

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) said, the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had dealt with matters he would have to refer to in the course of his remarks; but he could not help thinking that his speech would have been much more appropriate to the Telegraph Bill of 1892. The Amendment before the House dealt with three subjects. It proposed, first of all, to refer to a committee the agreement between the Post Office and the Telephone Company; secondly, it dealt with the question of municipal licences; and, thirdly, with the future policy of the department. The first of these three points referred to what he might call the past history of the telephone question, and he proposed to deal with that first, because upon that subject he was sorry to say he could not agree with the proposal of the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman introduced the matter in a temperate and moderate speech, and he hoped to be able to persuade him and the House of Commons that in this question of the agreement he had not had a free hand, and, whatever his views might have been with regard to the agreement, he was necessarily bound to accept and adopt it. That was a proposition he should do his best to support, and he was sure the House would listen to him while he gave his arguments. In the first place, before the question of this argument first came up, there were two companies which held licenses for the whole country unrestricted in the operations which they were able to carry out. The public had no doubt begun to feel that the telephone service of the country was inefficient and inadequate, and had recognised the inability of the companies adequately to provide both for the local systems and also for the trunk wire systems of the country, which would necessitate the expenditure of very large sums of money. The Government were alive to this fact, that the telegraph revenue of the country was being very largely interfered with, and they were also anxious to give facilities for the extension of the telephone service, which they recognised as necessary for the commercial interests of the country. The Government were pressed very strongly to take the whole system of telephones into their own hands. Hon. Members who sat in the last Parliament would remember that the hon. baronet, the Member for the College Division of Glasgow, in the month of March, 1892, brought forward a motion urging the Government to purchase the telephone systems, but the Government at that time did not see their way to a purchase. They had the experience of 1870 before them, when the Government of the day were forced to purchase the telegraphs; and when in undertaking a compulsory purchase of the telegraph systems they had to pay certainly twice, if not three times, their estimated value, and in these circumstances the late Government very naturally and very rightly hesitated to adopt a policy which might have led them into an extravagant purchase of the telephones. They, therefore, developed the alternative policy, the policy which had been described that night—namely, to take over the trunk wire telephone system of the country, and to give certain facilities to the companies to develop the local areas, and by so doing to restrict the operations of the companies to the local areas, and enable them to supply a more effective service for the use of telephone subscribers. That policy was fully described in a Treasury Minute, and then the Telegraph Bill of 1892 was introduced. That Bill and the Treasury Minute were referred to a Committee of the House of Commons, and that Committee took evidence. He had no reason to think that any applications to be heard before the Committee were received from corporations,- or that any application of the kind was refused. The suggestion that corporations were excluded from giving evidence was, as far as he knew, without foundation.

Mr. J. W. BENN said, the House would remember that the right hon. Member for the University of London pleaded that there should be added to the reference to the Committee that they should have power to send for persons, papers, and records, and that the request was not assented to.

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY said, that that did not affect his statement that, as far as he knew, no application to be heard was received from any corporation. He, therefore did not think it was fair to say that corporations were excluded from giving information. The Committee reported that "they had considered the Bill and made Amendments thereto," that in their opinion the responsibility for the details of the agreement with the Companies must rest with the Government, and that the Agreement should be laid before Parliament. He had asked the opinion of leading Members of the Committee, and he had been told by them that they intended no more than that Parliament should be informed of the result of the negotiations. [*Cries of* "Oh."] The report did not say that the Agreement should be laid upon the table of the House for the assent of the House, and in the Act of Parliament no mention of such a condition was made. There was an analogous case to which he might draw attention. In the Telegraph Act, 31 and 32 Victoria, cap. 110, power was given to the Postmaster General to make certain contracts, and section 22 of the Act said:—

> "Copies of all contracts, agreements, and arrangements, from time to time made under the authority of this Act, shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within 14 days of the commencement of the Session next succeeding the making of such contract, agreement, or arrangement."

These words were very like the recommendation of the Committee, and they had never been taken to mean that Parliamentary sanction had to be obtained to an agreement. They merely meant that Parliament should be informed of each contract or agreement made under the Act. The same view was taken by the Committee in their Special Report, and there was no foundation for the idea that they meant that Parliamentary sanction must be obtained for the agreement beforehand.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked whether his right hon. Friend had not said, on more than one occasion, that the agreement would be laid on the table of the House and that the House would have an opportunity to discuss it?

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY replied, that his hon. Friend's recollection was not quite accurate. He had explained frequently that the Agreement was merely the embodiment in a formal legal document of the arrangement entered into by his predecessor. He had always declared that the agreement was one which he was bound to carry out. The Bill then passed through Parliament, and the preliminary documents for carrying out the policy of the late Government were duly signed. The first section of the Act of 1892 declared that it was expedient to raise money with a view to carry into effect the scheme of the Postmaster General for the development of the telephonic system, and, in particular, with a view to provide main lines of communication. That clause, he held, was a Parliamentary sanction of the scheme of the Postmaster General, and it was impossible to say, after reading that section, that the policy of the late

Government and the Agreement signed by the late Government had not been recognised formally by Parliament. The heads of the arrangement had now been embodied in a legal document and the local areas had been settled between the Post Office and the companies. If it had not been for the time taken in settling the areas within which, for the future, the companies were to be restricted in their operations, the legal agreements would have been signed on August 11th before the present Government came into office. The settlement of the areas was a matter of great difficulty and complexity, and in regard to it the telephone companies had acted in a very straightforward manner. The view taken by the Government was that there was a contract entered into between the late Government and the telephone companies from which they could not honourably withdraw; that they were bound to carry that contract into effect; and that in the circumstances they could not consent to the agreement being made part of the reference to the Committee which had been asked for. He was not responsible for the terms of the agreement, and he was content to rest his case upon the fact that when he accepted office he found that agreement in existence. He could not honourably relieve himself from the obligations to carry it out. There had been misapprehensions as to the effect of the agreement. He had seen it described in the daily papers as a "monstrous" agreement, and it had been stated that the Post Office was about to establish a huge private monopoly. But there was not an atom of foundation for that statement, as the agreement created no monopoly. In fact, he thought he should be able to show that it precluded the possibility of any monopoly being acquired by the companies. Section 18 of the agreement of the National Telephone Company declared that nothing should prejudice the right of the Postmaster General to establish, extend, maintain, and work any system or systems of telephonic communication in such a manner as he should think fit, or to grant licences for telephones to any persons on such terms as he might think fit. That was a complete reservation to the Postmaster General not only of the right to establish telephones himself if occasion should arise, but also of the right to grant to other companies or private persons licences to work telephonic systems in competition with the existing licensees. If the new agreement were not to come into operation the position of the National Telephone Company would remain practically the same as now, except that they would have control over the trunk wires as well as over the wires in the local areas. The effect of the agreement was that the Government took over the trunk wires and became responsible for them. The other matters dealt with concerned the interests of the telephone user much more than the interests of the Telephone Company. Fear had been expressed that this agreement might possibly interfere with the rights of local authorities and corporations in respect of their highways and streets. He thought Corporations were bound to keep in their own hands full control over their own streets, and they would be very unwise, in his opinion, if they allowed any private company or individual to acquire rights of interference over their streets. He was surprised the hon. Member should have made the statement that there was any danger in this matter.

MR. J. W. BENN interposing, explained that his point was that certain rights which, under ordinary circumstances, must be secured from Parliament by the National Telephone Company—an opportunity would be given to municipalities to be heard in such case—were under the agreement passed on by the Post Office without that trouble.

*MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: No, Sir; the hon. Member really has not looked into the question with his usual acuteness. The Post Office can confer no power upon the National Telephone Company, or any company, which is not subject to the absolute veto of the local authority.

MR. J. W. BENN: I am quite aware the power is subject. My contention is that power is secured from the Post Office without the necessity of coming to Parliament.

*MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: They have not got any power the exercise of which is not subject to the assent of the local authority.

MR. J. W. BENN: I am aware of that.

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: Then what harm is done? The position was this. The local authority could either veto the action of the Company; they could, under Section 5 of the Act of 1892, impose conditions on the exercise by the Company of the powers conferred by the Postmaster-General; or they could do what, in his opinion, would be much wiser—namely, refuse to let the Company come into their streets. They could say, Such work as is necessary we will do; you shall pay for it at cost price, *plus* any percentage which may be necessary to cover an expense of administration. He made that suggestion to the Association of Municipal Corporations, and he was interested to find that the great Corporation of Manchester had previously, without his knowledge, come to terms with the Company, exactly on the lines of his own suggestion. He confessed, therefore, he did not see any hardship on the local authorities, because they had the matter absolutely under their own control. A reference had been made to the charges for trunk wires. No doubt the Treasury laid down certain charges, but they were only suggested charges and would be open to revision by the light of experience as to whether they were reasonable or unreasonable. On this point his experience was that the political and Parliamentary pressure brought to bear on the Post Office was much more effective than it ever would be over a private company with whom they could not get into contact.

Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) asked whether the Postmaster-General would grant a licence to the municipality if the municipality were not satisfied with the terms of arrangement with the Telephone Company?

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY was coming to the question of Municipal Licences. Now, he strongly held that in all matters proper to them municipalities did their work much more effectively than the central Gavernment could, but there was a great distinction between telephones and such subjects as gas and water. Gas and water were necessaries for every inhabitant of the country; telephones were not and never would be. It was no use trying to persuade themselves that the use of telephones could be enjoyed by the large masses of the people in their daily life. [An hon. Member: "America."] He did not think his hon. Friend was aware of the fact that in the large towns of America subscribers had to pay £40 to £50 for the service which a subscriber in London obtained for from £10 to £20. He went further and said that in a town like London, or Glasgow, or Belfast, an effective telephone service would be practically impossible if the large majority of the houses were furnished with telephones, so great would be the confusion caused by the increased number of exchanges. He was not stating his own opinion, but that of experts. What was wanted was prompt communication, and if there were a large number of people connected with the various exchanges, and a greatly increased number of exchanges, you could not get that prompt communication on which alone the value of the telephone system depended. Another argument against a municipal telephone system was that it was in no sense a local requirement. Year by year the telephone system was becoming more and more a national means of communication from town to town, and it was no more local in its attributes at the present time than either the post or the telegraph. He did not think anyone would say that the municipalities should have local control of the telegraph and post office services. The telephone service was becoming not only national but international. They had already spoken from London with Marseilles, and before long there would very probably be telephonic communication with other large towns on the Continent. The view which he had stated that the telephone service was not local, but national and Imperial, had been confirmed in a striking way by that very Association of Municipal Corporations which had been quoted that night as opposed to the policy of the Department. They passed a resolution containing these words—

> "That the subject should be treated as an Imperial and not a local one."

He ventured to think that the granting of municipal licences would be in effect treating it as a local and not as an Imperial one. Of course, he and the Government recognised that the House of Commons took a great interest in this question, as did also the different localities. The Government were not disinclined that this question should be fairly and openly considered, and therefore he was glad to be able to announce that they were prepared to assent to a Committee with the object of considering the question of municipal licences, and also the question of the advisability of competition that had been raised and upon which he had said very little that evening. He was as strongly opposed as any Member of the House to the granting of a monopoly to the National Telephone Company or to any other company. He had resisted any attempt which might have been made to secure that end. He believed the monopoly ought to be in the hands of the Crown. He believed that the State who owned the monopoly was bound to provide, first of all, a reasonably efficient service, and, secondly, a reasonably cheap service to the public, either through itself or through its licensees. Therefore, if a case was made out in any locality that the service was either not reasonably efficient or not reasonably cheap, his opinion was that the Government would be bound to take steps to secure that such an efficient and reasonable service was provided. He did not want to prejudge this question. He had stated his own view upon it. The Government were willing that the matter should be considered by a Committee, and they proposed, instead of the words of the Amendment, to insert the following words:—

> "That a Committee shall be appointed to consider and report whether the provision now made for the telephone service in local areas is adequate, and whether it is expedient to supplement or improve this provision either by the granting of licences to local authorities or otherwise."

That would enable the Committee to consider the arguments, *pro* and *con*, on the question of competition, and he thought the House would recognise that in agreeing to the appointment of that Committee they had gone a long way—in fact, the whole way—to meet the wishes of the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment with the exception of the agreement, which they could not and ought not to consider other than a binding obligation on the Government.

MR. A. CAMERON CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston) said, so much dissatisfaction had been felt upon this subject that no harm could be done whilst nothing but good would result from the matter being fully and fairly investigated by an impartial Committee. He felt assured that no Committee of the House desired that any agreement made by the Government should be departed from, or that the House or the Government should ever fail to fulfil any obligation upon which it had entered. He wished to say a word or two on the objections which had been urged by the right hon. Gentleman to municipalities working their own telephone system. He had told them that telephones were not a necessity to the mass of the people. Well, all their municipalities were practically controlled by the working classes. If they did not wish to have the municipality controlling the telephone, then the municipality would not control them; but by allowing the municipality to get licences, they allowed the masses of the people in their cities to decide whether the telephones should be worked by the municipality or not. It had been stated that this was a nationol and not a local question. But as far as the licences granted in particular cities were concerned, this was a local question. The municipality of Glasgow was very anxious to have a licence to work its own telephone, but it was no less anxious that the Government should ultimately take up the telephones and work them on its own account. While, however, a licence was granted especially to work the Glasgow telephones, it was desired that the municipality should be the authority entrusted with the license. It had been suggested that where underground telephones were necessary, and where it was impossible for the municipality to entrust the control of the streets to any private corporation working for profit, that the municipality should lay these underground wires and take all the care of them. If the municipality was to lay the wires and take all the care of maintenance, there was no possible reason why the municipality should not take over all the undertaking and derive all the profit to be got from it. It seemed to him that corporations which had carried on their waterworks, gas, electric lighting, and, in some instances, their tramways with marked success, should be able to administer this business in an effective way so as to give a cheaper and better supply to their citizens, and, at the same time, make it a source of profit to the rates. He felt perfectly assured that the municipality of Glasgow if it were entrusted with this work would do it better and more cheaply than a company, and would earn a profit rather than incur losses by doing so.

SIR J. E. GORST (Cambridge University) desired to say a few words on policy of the Telephone Act 1892. It was quite true, as the right hon. Gentleman had said, that that policy became, not the policy only of the late Government, but of Parliament, because it was embodied in the Telegraph Bill which was considered by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, and by passing the Telegraph Act Parliament adopted and placed its own imprimatur on the policy which the Government had proposed. But what was the policy of the late Government? So far from being an attempt, as an hon. Member had declared, to create a gigantic monopoly, it was really a successful attempt on the part of the Government to prevent a monopoly growing up. At that time the Government had indeed a monopoly in the telephones by law, but, in fact, it had not a single trunk line in its possession, but only a few insignificant telephone exchanges. The whole telephonic system of the country was gradually becoming absorbed by the companies, and there was a fear that by getting hold of all the trunk lines, the companies would acquire not a legal monopoly but a practical monopoly, which would have prevented the Postmaster General from using his own rights under the law without a claim for compensation which would have been very difficult to resist. Besides, the development of this business was making a very serious inroad upon the telegraphic revenue, and the taxpayer's interests were being very seriously affected by the *laissez faire* of the Government. Thus it was the duty of the Government to make such proposals to Parliament as would prevent the monopoly, which was the property of the nation, from being practically destroyed; and their policy was explained in a Treasury minute dated May, 1892, and one of the clauses was as follows :—

> "Unless the trunk wires are in the hands of the State, a monopoly injurious to the public interest would inevitably ensue, to the advantage of the company which first laid down such trunk wires."

Then it was stated most distinctly that it was the object of the policy to secure—

> "That expansion of the telephonic system which is called for by public opinion and the necessities of the case."

It was necessary for the Postmaster General to take possession of the trunk wires, and, unless the Postmaster General was then immediately ready to establish telephonic exchanges and to buy out the existing interests of the companies, he had no other course than to make a fair and reasonable arrangement with the existing companies, and so prevent the enormous outlay of public money which would have been necessary for taking the telephones over. The existing companies had only 19 years unexpired of their licence—a period now diminished to 16 years—and although the companies strongly pressed the Government, in consideration of their giving up the trunk lines and entering into the agreement now being discussed, to extend the period, the Government refused. The temporary nature of the licence was in itself some protection to the public; but the Government, in laying this policy before the House, were not satisfied with that alone. They reminded the telephone companies and Parliament that the right of the Post Office to establish telephone exchanges had been reserved by Mr. Fawcett, and would be maintained.

> "The Department holds itself ready, as in the past, to comply with the reasonable demands of any town or district for telephonic facilities."

Further, they pointed out that no other licence for the whole country would be granted, and that no application would be entertained for a licence to establish a telephonic exchange unless it were backed by a resolution passed by the corporation or other municipal authoritiy of the district, and they proceeded then to say that in this way competition would not be excluded, but a check would be imposed on the formation of companies whose object was to force the existing licensees to buy them out. It was also to be distinctly understood that should licences be granted on other principles no other company, now or hereafter to be licensed, should have any ground of action for breach of contract or want of good faith on the part of the Postmaster General. What more could possibly have been done in the enunciation of the telephone policy to thoroughly protect the public and maintain the Postmaster General's monopoly, while securing all reasonable facilities and advantages to localities? That policy was examined by a Select Committee and embodied in the Telephone Act of 1892. The agreement now under consideration was entered into under that policy; and he was glad that the Post master General had stated that the agreement could not now be upset even by Parliament. Parliament, of course, had power to do anything; but this was an agreement entered into by the Government of the State and a public company; and if Parliament were to upset such an agreement there would be an end to all public contracts and confidence. As to the future policy of the Government, that was another question, and he could only regret that, instead of that policy being determined by the Government themselves, it was given into the doubtful hands of a Select Committee. He should have thought that the system of administering the affairs of State by Select Committee had already gone too far. Sooner or later the Government would have to stop that course, and would have to assume its proper function of administering the affairs of the country.

SIR JAMES M. CARMICHAEL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) was glad the Postmaster-General had consented to have this question investigated by a Select Committee. He held the opinion that no Government Department ought to enter into any agreement with any commercial body—whether it was an agreement between the Secretary for Foreign Affairs and a company in Uganda, or an agreement between the Postmaster General, and a telephone company—without having first subjected it to the review, the revision, the sanction, and possibly the rejection of the House. He said that without any distrust of the capacity or probity of the Government—no matter of what political colour the Government might be. In fact it was the innocence of the Government that was their danger; because, when any body of men, trained in commercial life were brought into contact with a body of men trained in official life, it always followed that the commercial gentlemen got the best of the bargain. It was therefore advisable that all transactions of this sort should be first submitted to the House, which was supposed to contain highly-trained intellect in every walk of life. What he had said was well illustrated by the agreements with the telephone companies. The Postmaster General had said he felt himself in honour bound by any agreement entered into by his predecessor, and that he was bound to carry out the policy of his predecessor. But which policy was it? Because the policy embodied in the Treasury minute of 1892 was entirely different from the policy set forth in the agreement initialled by the late Postmaster General, and signed in full by the chairman of the Telephone Company. He gave his right hon. Friend credit for trying to reconcile those two policies, because he had introduced into the new agreement matter from the Treasury minute of 1892. He quite agreed with the sentiment expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University, when he said that the Treasury minute was a most admirable example of what a telephone policy should be. That minute contemplated agreements between the Government and telephone companies in the plural; it provided that the Government should take over the trunk line, so that there should be no monopoly, and recognised that there might be a system of competition within the same area. It enjoined that no licence should be issued until a resolution in favour of it was passed by the Corporation or other Municipal authority, and evidence given that there was sufficient capital to carry out the undertaking. Was it to limit competition that these conditions were imposed? No, for it said—

> "In this way competition will not be excluded, but a check will be imposed on the formation of companies whose sole object is to force the existing licensees to buy them up."

There the whole spirit of the Treasury

minute was a spirit encouraging competition. But when he came to the agreement, he found they did not contain one word of the articles set forth in the minute. There was no mention in the agreement of the right of the Government to grant competing licences. There was no hint that the companies could be subjected to any competition whatever. The principle of encouraging competition was entirely given away. It was understood that only two companies—the National Telephone Company and the New Telephone Company—were to be amalgamated, and that they were not to be subjected to competition. It was true that paragraph 18 of the new agreement, which was much broader in its scope than the old agreement, did retain to the Postmaster General the power to grant licences, and to make arrangements with other companies or persons, which would include corporations. But when the Postmaster General was approached by a Corporation to carry out that right which he retained, and on which he laid such stress, he declined to do so. An application was made to him by Glasgow. One would have thought that if any city could have fulfilled the two conditions laid down in the Treasury minute, the city of Glasgow could. If there was any area at all in which competition could be allowed, it was in an area of the size of Glasgow, which came next to London in proportion to population. The Postmaster General claimed that his policy was endorsed by the Telegraph Act of 1892, but when that Act was passed the agreement which he considered binding had not been before the House. The Act of 1892 endorsed the policy of the Treasury Minute of May 1892. If the Postmaster General would carry out the policy of the Treasury Minute, allowing free and healthy competition, see that the companies to whom he gave competing licences were solid and fit to compete, and allow corporations and municipalities to enter into competition, he would be satisfied.

*Sir C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College), expressed himself in favour of the nationalisation of the telephones. There was nothing antagonistic to the ultimate realisation of that in granting licences to municipalities. Until the nation was prepared to take the matter up, the municipalities might be intrusted with the telephones. The ultimate assumption of the control of the system by the nation would be facilitated rather than impeded by municipal co-operation. What was wanted was free competition. Had the proposal of the Postmaster General been put in competition with a motion that in the opinion of the House, telephonic licences should be granted to municipal and other authorities, he should have voted for the latter. The House had, however, now either to accept the proposal of the Postmaster General, or vote for a Committee to inquire into the agreement. If the Committee were authorised to inquire into the expediency of granting licences to municipal and other authorities, the whole question of competition would be opened up, and by the decision of the Committee the policy of the Postmaster General would have to be guided. If it were proposed that licences should be granted to municipalities, and that there should be competition and not monopoly, he would vote for that and against a Committee, but when the Postmaster General offered a Committee, and the proposition of the hon. Member did no more, it seemed to him that the suggestion of the Postmaster General was in every respect worthy of support. From a Post Office point of view, it appeared to him that it was most important that they should have competition. The monopoly, it was argued, was about to be confirmed, but it would break down the moment that the policy of granting licences to municipalities and competing companies was adopted. He was utterly opposed to the views of the Postmaster General on the subject of the municipal working of the telephone. He entirely favoured, however, the appointment of the Committee to inquire into the subject of competition and the feasibility of granting these licences, and he strongly urged the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets to accept the Government proposal.

Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square), said, in the absence of the late Postmaster General, who, with himself, had been specially responsible for the policy adopted in 1892, he trusted the House would be willing to give him a few minutes of its attention. There were two matters which he thought might be entirely separated—

one was the agreement, the other was the policy to be followed side by side with it. They might accept this agreement, and they might nevertheless carry out every single detail of the Treasury minute of May, 1892. That was the point which he wished to bring home to Parliament and to the country. The hon. Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow had tried to show that the heads of the agreement made with the Telephone Company were not in accordance with the Treasury minute of 1892. He bowed to the independent judgment of the hon. Member, who thought that officials were incompetent to deal with the astute gentlemen of commercial companies, but he could assure him that every clause of this agreement was gone through with the greatest possible care, not only by the permanent officials of the Department, but also by himself and other responsible Ministers; and he must claim that he had also some commercial knowledge, and was not incompetent to form an opinion on a document of this kind. He had been present also at many of the negotiations, and they saw that in no single respect should the rights of the Government be interfered with, or the possibility of competition, when necessary, lost. He thought it was a mistake for the hon. Gentleman to compromise the reserved rights of the Government by stating that they were not reserved in this document. Surely it was unnecessary to put into the document that those rights were reserved by Parliament to the executive Government.

SIR J. M. CARMICHAEL: It was put in to the agreement.

MR. G. J. GOSCHEN said, these rights were inherent in the executive Government. He thought he might state in the strongest possible way that the Postmaster General, the present Government, and the late Government held that view. Were the rights given away by the draft agreement or by the heads of the agreement? Was there any private promise to the Company that the Government could not grant licences if it wished? The power remained to Her Majesty's Government to grant licences to municipal corporations, or to grant licences to other companies if they so chose, and therefore no attack upon this agreement could be made with regard to any particular conditions. No examination by the Committee could strengthen the inherent right of the Government which had been retained, and, therefore, to upset an agreement which had been made in order to insure rights which existed, notwithstanding that agreement, was surely a course which the House of Commons need not take. He would ask the House of Commons whether it realised what it would mean by disavowing this document. Hon. Members feared that they had parted with certain rights, but if it could be shown, as it had been, that those rights were reserved to the executive Government the agreement need not be attacked for the purpose of securing to the municipal corporations the right to exercise the powers they desired to exercise. It would be the first time in the history of Parliament, he believed, that a document signed by the Government was repudiated by the House. It would be evading the law if they were to endeavour to get out of a contract which had thus been entered into, and it would at least be considered very sharp practice. The House of Commons ought not to enter on a course of this kind. He had shown that it was unnecessary to upset the agreement, and he now contended that it would be inexpedient. He felt strongly that in such a case the House would be embarking upon a course which if successful would make it very difficult to conduct negotiations in future. The late Government was as much compromised in this matter as the present Government. [Several hon. MEMBERS: "More so."] Yes, he frankly admitted more so. It was, however, with the present Government to settle the policy side by side with the agreement; but unfortunately, the late Government were no longer in a position to give effect to their responsibility. He frankly told the House that if they were still in power and a document signed by them was repudiated by the House he should hold that the Minister could no longer hold his position. He believed such a course, if adopted, would shake general confidence in the administration of public business. He wished to say just one word or two about the position outside the agreement. It was a question for Her Majesty's Government how far side by side with the agreement, and in virtue of the rights which had been reserved under it and reserved to Parliament, they would or would not allow further competition. It must be borne in mind, however, that competition in the question of telephones stood on a different footing from competition in other matters, because of the confusion it must necessarily involve. There might be many industries in which five or six companies might exercise their business at the same time, but great confusion would arise if that number of companies—or even two companies—sought to conduct telephone business together in the same area. Still, he attached less importance to that point because the Government had offered to refer that matter to a Select Committee. The Committee, he gathered from the speech of the Postmaster General, would discuss a number of questions—how far competition should be introduced, how far municipal corporations should be intrusted with the exercise of certain powers, and he was not sure whether or not it would be within the scope of their reference to consider the question of the purchase of the telephones. He was inclined to think that the words "and otherwise" would enable the Committee to do so. He desired to say here that the late Government were entirely responsible for the non-purchase of the telephones two or three years ago. The policy of the Treasury minute had scarcely been impugned. By that policy they stood, and by that policy they hoped the Government would stand. With regard to the trunk lines he would point out to the hon. Member for St. Rollox that if the Government had not bought the trunk lines no Member from Glasgow could communicate with London except by the kind permission of the National Telephone Company.

Sir J. M. CARMICHAEL: I am entirely in favour of the purchase of the trunk lines and of the Treasury Minute.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, that then the hon. Member must be in favour of the agreement. ["No, no."] Could the hon. Member prove the slightest divergence between the two, except that the conditions expressed in the Treasury Minute had not been included in the agreement. He had put his views very candidly before the House, and he hoped the majority of Members would be satisfied with the offer made by the Government. That offer was made with considerable reluctance, because the Government were anxious to maintain their own responsibility. The Committee would discuss the question of municipal licences, of competition, and if necessary, of the purchase of the telephones by the State. He hoped that hon. Members would be satisfied with that result, and would not go the length of upsetting this contract.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, the real question was whether the House ought to have the right to ratify or to reject this agreement. They did not quarrel with the Government for purchasing the trunk lines; but the agreement went a great deal further, and embodied all sorts of conditions and arrangements with the existing Telephone Companies. The report of the Committee on the Telephone Bill stated that the agreement was to be laid on the Table, and he entirely contested the Postmaster-General's statement that that simply meant that it was to be placed on the Table in order that the House might be advertised of the fact that the agreement had been made, It was impossible to conceive that such an agreement could possibly be made without being laid upon the Table of the House. The hon. Member for North Bucks, who was a member of the Committee on the Telephone Bill, informed him that he understood the Committee's report to mean that the agreement was to be submitted to the judgment of the House. It was said that the agreement had been initialled by the late Postmaster-General, and that, therefore, it was binding upon his successor. But that agreement was made with two separate Telephone Companies, the object being to prevent a monopoly and to create competition. Since then, however, one of the Companies had absorbed the other, and, therefore, the fundamental basis of the agreement no longer existed. His right hon. Friend the Postmaster General had given them a distinct pledge that this agreement should be laid on the Table of the House, and that they should have an opportunity of discussing it. But was he not trifling with the House if he led them to believe that an opportunity for discussing the matter was to be afforded? At any rate, that promise involved the right of the House to expect that the agreement would not be ratified before they had a chance of approving it. He did not think it at all a good one, because it created a monopoly, and gave this company power to lay its system over any particular town without first obtaining the permission of the Post Office, which every other Company had to get.

*MR. ARNOLD MORLEY said, that, if the agreement had not come into existence at all, the company would have its licences notwithstanding, and would be in exactly the same position as under the agreement. Instead of being restricted to local areas, they would have licences over the whole country, trunk lines and all.

MR. H. LABOUCHERE said, that might be so, but would any other company have got a licence? One of the terms of the agreement was that two or three licences should be swept away. He would tell his right hon. Friend what occurred with the late Mr. Fawcett at the commencement of the telephones. Mr. Fawcett had granted a licence to this telephone company, whereupon some responsible persons came to him in the Lobby complaining that they could not get a similiar licence. He represented to Mr. Fawcett the result of the interview, and that Gentleman fully agreed with him that in giving only one licence he was creating a monopoly, but stated that he should be ready to grant licences to persons who had a monetary basis. But under the late Postmaster General there seemed a tendency not to give them, and his right hon. Friend appeared to be following the same policy. By a clause in the agreement the licence had to be renewed every seven years; if it were not renewed then the company ceased to be a telephone company; but his right hon. Friend had said, "No one wonld dream of enforcing this." That was to say, that a huge monopoly would be created, and in the end the State would have to pay an excessive price for them as was the case with the telegraphs. This was one of the most watered companies existing, and he did not think they should encourage such watering of capital, and levying of rates, to benefit capitalists and other objectionable people. He hoped his hon. Friend would stick to his guns rather than accept the offer which the right hon. Gentleman had made.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby) said, it would be a most serious thing if the House of Commons repudiated an agreement which had been made by the Executive Government. The administration of the country depended to an enormous extent on the good faith of the Government and the good faith of Parliament. If Parliament interfered with that principle it would strike a blow which would affect questions far wider than anything connected with telephones. With regard to this agreement, he must say that if it was interfered with they would inflict great public mischief. He did not believe, however, that the House of Commons would do anything of the kind. It never had done it, and he did not believe it would do it now. As he understood the objection to the agreement, it was that the agreement had in some way or other deprived the Government of something which it ought to have. The Postmaster General said it did not, and that he could set up any competition that he liked. In this matter they had to take into account various considerations. He remembered perfectly well an estimate made by Mr. Scudamore that the purchase of the telegraphs would cost about £3,000,000, but ultimately it cost the Government £10,000,000; and at this moment the Government lost £500,000 a year by the telegraphs. It, therefore, required great caution in dealing with this matter. He thought the policy adopted was a sound policy. If they set aside this agreement the company would have a more complete monopoly than before. The Member for Northampton spoke of a poor company and watered capital, but he knew nothing about that. Let him observe that the first thing the Committee would have to consider would be whether the provision made for telephone service in local areas was adequate—whether sufficient service was given at a proper price. If the Committee came to the conclusion that the service was not good, or that the charges were too high, they would report against the company. What would be the consequence? Some other service would be given in place of the service which was inadequate. The company was, in fact, only acting as temporary agents for the Government, and if the Government were not satisfied they could give it in favour of some other persons. The Government desired to carry out the policy of the Minute of 1892. It commended itself to his hon. Friend because it recognised the right of competition, if competition were necessary. The first thing which the Committee would have to determine was, what was the position and action of the present company under its present conditions. The next thing to determine was whether, in substitution or supplement of the present service, and in response to the desires of other parties, licences should be granted to the local authorities or otherwise. What more could hon. Members wish the Committee to do? It was not denied that the House of Commons could do anything short of turning a man into a woman; it could, no doubt, repudiate the National Debt; it had the power to do so, but it would not be advisable. It seemed to him, therefore, that everything which anyone could desire was included under the terms of the recommendation to the Committee which his right hon. Friend had offered, because it would have to determine whether they were or were not satisfied with the service as being adequate, or whether the service should be handed over to the municipalities or anyone else. The reference to the Committee would be—

> "to consider and report whether the provision now made for the telephone service in local areas is inadequate, and whether it is expedient to supplement or improve this provision either by granting a licence to local authorities or otherwise."

The Government had reserved actually the power to grant licences to whomsoever it chose, to undertake the service itself, or to give it to some one else. It was a mistake to suppose that it had created a monopoly in this company. There was no monopoly contemplated by the minute, and no monopoly was created by the agreement. He hoped in these circumstances that the House would adopt such a recommendation as he had indicated.

MR. A. D. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars) pointed out that the contention of the Mover and Seconder of the Motion was to the effect that the policy of the present Government was not that of the last Government. They did not object to Parliament buying the trunk wires, but to the method by which the purchase was to be effected. The Treasury Minute was perfectly clear on the points of granting licences to local authorities and maintaining competition; and the policy of the last Government, as stated in the House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Postmaster General, was to the same effect. The objections taken were, to the policy pursued by the present Postmaster General, inasmuch as he refused to grant licences to local authorities; and also to the fact that the proposed agreement went altogether beyond the Treasury Minute. In the proposed agreement there were new charges to be made to the public which might be described as terminals. There was not a word relating to such a charge in the Treasury Minute, nor in the statements made to the House by the last Government, nor in the evidence given before the Committee of 1892. The Postmaster General had said that that Committee had considered the whole policy of the Government, and had approved of it. That was impossible, as they reported in the month of June, while the heads of arrangement were not initialled until the following August, and these were kept secret by the Postmaster General for two years after that, although asked for frequently in the House during that time. It was impossible that the Committee could report on anything more than was before them—namely, the Treasury Minute and the Bill—to neither of which had any objection been taken during that Debate, except as to the excessive mileage scale of the Post Office. The chairman of the National Telephone Company drew the attention of the Committee to the high mileage rates the Post Office intended to charge, and said that while many of the company's present rates were 3d. and 6d., the Post Office would make them 6d. and 1s., that was to say, they would double them. The terminals would operate in this way: If, for example, London had a telephone licence, it could not send a message to Brighton unless Brighton had also an exchange, which would deliver the message free, otherwise the London message would be delivered through the present Company at Brighton, which would charge a terminal for doing so, The effect of that would be to double the rate between London and Brighton. In Scotland the increase in charges would be enormous. Where the excessive Post Office mileage scale and the terminals both operated, many of the current rates would be not only doubled, but trebled. Competition would therefore be seriously checked by the proposed agreement. In many places such a large number of commercial men required inter-town telephone service, that they would not subscribe to any exchange which could not give it at least as cheap as at present, and this would be made impossible by the proposed agreement. The monopoly of the National Telephone Company expired with the Bell Patent at the close of 1890, but the monopoly had since been recrerated and maintained by the Postmaster General refusing licences to municipalities in order that they might compete. The National Telephone Company had no monoply, except that which was conferred on them by the action of the Postmaster General. The Treasury Minute expressly noted the inefficiency of single-wire telephone exchanges, and the necessity of a double-wire system, and the Telephone Company's own witnesses told the Committee in 1892, that the local exchanges in different towns must have double wires, otherwise the Government trunks would not give efficient service. One of the Telephone Company's witnesses said that the £1,000,000 the Government intended to expend would be useless unless they were connected with double-wire local exchanges. Nevertheless, the Postmaster General had refused to license municipalities, who would erect double-wire exchanges, and proposed that agreement with a telephone company that had no double wires at all, except a few in the Newcastle district; and, in the end, we should therefore have a system which the Treasury Minute had said was inefficient, and which was condemned by the Telephone Company's own representatives. If the Postmaster could amend his suggestion for a Committee by referring to it all that had occurred since the Act of 1892, the offer might be taken as satisfactory, but, if not, he recommended his hon. Friend the Member for the Tower Hamlets to go to a Division. Down to the end of 1890 the National Telephone Company had an absolute monopoly. Since then they had no monopoly whatever except what had been created and maintained by the Postmaster General. He deprecated terminals which were now being charged, and said they were invented by the Agreement. There was no mention of them in the Treasury Minute, although it was claimed that it left a wide discretion to the telephone companies in the matter. Many other objections to the Agreement might be pointed out. The Treasury Minute said an efficient telephone service was impossible without double wires. The Post Office was refusing licences to Local Authorities who would have proper double wire and were making a bargain for 17 years with companies who had few such wires.

*MR. J. FLETCHER MOULTON (Hackney S.) only wished to put quite clearly the position of those who thought it advisable that the inquiry should be somewhat widened, lest it should be thought that they were less particular about the good faith of the Administrative Government. The question to go before the Committee was not the question of the validity of the agreement, but the question of the nature of the proposals contained in it——

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, interposing, said that that would be within the scope of the reference.

*MR. MOULTON expressed himself as being quite satisfied. There were many things in the proposed agreement which required explanation, and it was most important that the House should be made fully aware of the nature of these grants and their full scope. They had had enough experience in connection with Tramways and Gas and Water Companies to make them very careful how they granted any further monopolies.

Mr. J. W. BENN understood that the agreement was to be submitted to the Committee, and that its effect on the rights of the municipalities of large towns like Liverpool, Glasgow, and other places to establish systems of their own would be considered. In that case he thought he would not be wise in pressing his motion.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) asked the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he would withhold the agreement until after the Committee had reported?

Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Lowestoft) suggested that it could do no harm to hold the agreement over for another month. He would like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the chairman of the National Telephone Company, at a recent meeting of the shareholders, stated that the agreement would be submitted to Parliament for approval. If that was so, what ground was there for supposing that the National Telephone Company would have any cause of complaint if Parliament desired to modify that agreement?

Mr. J. W. BENN said, he would be glad if the Postmaster General could see his way to accede to the request that the agreement should be held over pending the deliberations of the Committee, for the reason that he and those who agreed with him contended that the agreement laid on the Table did not in some respects agree with the heads of the arrangement.

Sir W. V. HARCOURT explained that what he said was that the effect of the agreement was to be before the Committee. As to the matter of form, the proper way in which the question would be put was to leave out all the words after the word "consider" in the Motion of his hon. Friend, and to insert words carrying out the suggestion made by his right hon. Friend the Postmaster General.

Question:—

"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Put and negatived.

Question proposed: "That those words be there added."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment:—

"To leave out all the words after the word 'consider,' to the end thereof, in order to add the words 'and report whether the provision now made for the telephone service in local areas is adequate; and whether it is expedient to supplement or improve this provision either by the granting of licences to Local Authorities or otherwise."—(*Mr. Arnold Morley.*)

Question:—

"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment,"

put and negatived. Words added.

Question:—

"That the words, 'a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report whether the provision now made for the telephone service in local areas is adequate; and whether it is expedient to supplement or improve this provision, either by the granting of licences to Local Authorities' be added after the first word 'That,' or otherwise."

Put and agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Ordered: That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL.

The Select Committee was nominated of,—Mr. Baldwin, Marquess of Carmarthen, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Diamond, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Frederick Frye, Sir John Gorst, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Kearley, Mr. Leake, Sir John Lubbock, Sir Blundell Maple, Sir Francis Powell, and Mr. Samuel Smith.

Ordered,—That the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records.

Ordered,—That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Thomas Ellis.*)

House adjourned at Five minutes after Twelve o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 4th March 1895.

SUNDAY BILL. [H.L.]

A Bill to amend an Act passed in the year 1781 for Preventing certain Abuses and Profanations on the Lord's Day called Sunday.—Was presented by Lord Hobhouse; read 1^{a}; and to be printed. [No. 29.]

SEA FISHERIES REGULATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

*The LORD PRIVY SEAL (Lord Tweedmouth), in moving that this Bill be read a second time, said, that ever since he first sat in the House of Commons the subject was one to which he had given considerable attention; and he should be afraid to say how many Committees and Commissions to deal with it he had sat upon during that time. Either as a private Member or as Chairman he had been placed upon them by both Parties; and he had never dealt with the subject in any way from a Party point of view. If any evidence were wanted of the fact that the subject had been dealt with in freedom from Party bias it might be found in the fact that Bills on this subject, very similar to this Bill, brought forward by himself in 1890 and 1891, had on the backs of them the names of such representative Members from Scotland, and men of such diverse views as Mr. Duff, Colonel Malcolm of Poltalloch, Mr. Finlay, and Mr. Angus Sutherland, the present Chairman of the Scotch Fisheries Board. This Bill was not urged upon their Lordships from any Party point of view; but it was a sincere and honest attempt to deal with a question of great importance. A somewhat similar Bill was before their Lordships last year, when, owing to their action, it was dropped. The first objection taken to it in this House was, that it compelled the owners of mussel beds to produce their title; and the second, that Scotland was compulsorily divided into districts and certain rating provisions made, which were objectionable On both these points an endeavour had been made to meet the views of their Lordships. The mussel clauses had been inserted in this Bill in exactly the same form as they left this House last year after Amendment by this House. With regard to the division of the country into districts, it was urged last year that Scotland had received different treatment from England, and that if provisions that had been and were in force in England were adopted with regard to Scotland there would be less objection to the proposals of the Bill. This Bill embodied the exact provisions as to District Fishery Committees which were now in force in England. In 1888 a Conservative Government passed a Bill for instituting District Committees in England; and in this Bill the provisions of the English Act were applied *mutatis mutandis* to Scotland. The fishing industry was a more important one to Scotland than it was ever to England. Scotland was a poorer country with a small population, and at the same time with a very long coast-line. The extent of the coast-line of Scotland was about 2,500 miles, and that of England about 2,000 miles. The number of fishermen in each country was very nearly equal—roughly about 45,000 men and boys. To these must be added 1,600 fish-curers in Scotland, employing some 50,000 persons; then there were boat-builders, net-makers, coopers, and so forth, with their wives, families, and dependents. It would be no exaggeration to say that one-eighth of the population of the country were engaged in the fishing trade in one way or the other. As to the amount of fish caught there was pretty nearly equality between the two countries. But Scotland with a land area only about one-half that of England and Wales and a population of less than one-seventh must look upon her fisheries differently from England and Wales. In the main all parties were agreed upon four points. One was, that there should be a reconstitution of the Scottish Fisheries Board, and that something of a representative character should be given to it. The second was, that there should be district fisheries Committees. The third was that some further powers should be given to the Fisheries Board to regulate the various forms of fishing that are practised around the coast. The fourth was that some Legislative facilities should be given for improving and developing the mussel fisheries, which are so important for furnishing bait. On these four points

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

there was practical agreement; and surely they would be able to find the means of giving effect to the universal wishes of all concerned. The Fishery Board now consisted of nine members, all appointed, of whom three were sheriffs, which was a large representation of the legal element. The present Bill proposed to retain this number, nine, but that three members should be appointed triennially by the Government of the day—namely, the Chairman, one Sheriff, and one fishery expert; and the remaining six to be nominated by the District Committees. In the formation of the District Committees, it was proposed to follow the lines of the English Bill, and to allow those concerned to make application to the Secretary for Scotland to form themselves into districts. The Committees would be Committees of the County Councils, just as the English District Committees were; and if more than one county were included in one District of such Councils it would be a Joint Committee. The proposal was, that one-half the members of these District Committees should be appointed by the County Councils and Borough Councils within the district, that the other half should for the first three years be appointed by the Secretary for Scotland in the same way as in England members were appointed by the President of the Board of Trade, and that after 1898 they should be elected by members of the fishery interest triennially, at the same time as the County Councils. It had been suggested that these District Committees would be great expenders of money; but seven years' experience of the English Committees showed that they had been exceedingly economical bodies, and that their ratal demands had amounted to mere fractions of a penny in the pound. The twelve English districts were:—Northumberland, the North-eastern, the Eastern, Kent and Essex, Sussex, the Southern, Devon, Cornwall, Glamorgan, Milford Haven, the Western, and Lancashire. Of these twelve, only six had been involved in any considerable expenditure; and their last year's expenditure was as follows:—Northumberland, £407, equal to a rate of ·051d.; North-eastern, £514, equal to a rate of ·013d.; Kent and Essex, £133, equal to a rate of ·004d.; Devon, £138, equal to ·007d.; Glamorgan, £227, equal to a rate of ·020d.; Lancashire, £2,779, equal to a rate of ·026d. He would give an instance or two to show what bodies were included in these districts. In the case of Northumberland, the county alone, with the various cities within it, including Newcastle; in the North-Eastern District, Durham, the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, parts of Lindsey in Lincolnshire, and the boroughs of South Shields, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Hull, Scarborough, and Grimsby; in Kent and Essex—part of Kent and the whole of Essex; in the Devon Division—Devon, part of Cornwall, and the boroughs of Devonport, Plymouth, and Exeter; in the Lancashire District—the counties of Cheshire, Lancashire, and Cumberland, with the boroughs of Barrow, Birkenhead, Blackburn, Bolton, Bootle, Burnley, Bury, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Preston, Rochdale, St. Helen's, Salford, Stockport, Southport, and Wigan. It would be seen that these districts were large districts, that they represented all sorts of interests, and he maintained that the constitution of similar districts in Scotland would be of the greatest possible use to the Scottish fisheries. The next point dealt with in the Bill was the question of attempting to regulate, or to give the Fishery Board power to regulate, the various sorts of fisheries carried on off the Scottish coast. It was proposed to give the Scottish Board discretion with regard to prohibiting what was called seine trawling for herring. He knew there had been considerable controversy on this question, and that it was maintained, on the one hand, that there was no necessity for regulation, and, on the other hand, that it was greatly required. It was contended that this seine trawling for herrings in shallow water did considerable damage, that it broke up the shoals of herring, that it was a wasteful method of fishing, and caused at certain seasons the destruction of a great number of immature fish. The seine fishermen themselves were inclined to admit this, and would be quite willing to see a certain restriction put upon them during the earlier months of the season. While it was not proposed in the Bill to put any absolute restriction on this form of fishing, it was proposed to give the Board the power to regulate it, and to prohibit in such places as they might think necessary. Then it was proposed to give the Board power to apply the same restrictions to that portion of the sea between Rattray Point and the Fame Islands, as they were empowered to enforce within a line drawn from Rattray Point to Duncansby Head. In this respect the Bill followed absolutely the Bill of 1889, which was brought in by Colonel Malcolm, and supported by the Government of the day. It seemed to him only fair that teh same restrictions should apply to the waters south of Rattray Head as those which applied to the north. He did not rest his case in favour of this clause, or any of the old bogies raised against trawling. He did not pretend that trawling destroyed the spawn of food fish, or that the number of immature fish killed was sufficient to materially reduce the number of fish in the sea, or that the productiveness of the sea had been materially affected by trawling operations. He rested his case on a different point—namely, the number of fishermen, men and boys, in Scotland was about 45,000, and of them, the number to be found on board trawlers was, he thought, 706; the remainder of the Scottish fishermen were scattered along the coast in little colonies at no great distance from one another. On the East Coast especially, fishing villages would be found about every 10 or 12 miles, with little harbours of their own. These men owned their own boats, and, for the most part, they carried on their fishing operations from their own homes, and from their own little harbours. It was true that, at certain seasons, some of them who had larger boats made expeditions further afield, but most of their fishing was conducted from their own harbours. Their fishing-grounds must, therefore, be within a moderate distance of their homes. That was not the case with the trawlers. The steam trawler was in one place to-day and in another to-morrow, and whatever might be said about the effect of trawling on fish, there was no doubt that a trawler working a particular ground could practically clear the fish out of it altogether. He did not say that there was a permanent destruction of fish, but some months would elapse before the ground was again peopled with fish. In their way, the men who lived in the villages along the coast might be practically deprived of the possibility of getting fish for two or three months on their usual fishing-grounds. That, he thought, was a very hard state of things. There could be no question of hardship with the trawler. He had the whole of the North Sea open to him, and there could be no hardship in providing that he should leave the waters close to the coast to the operations of the line and drift-net fishermen. But there was another question involved. These line fishermen had an enormous length of line. The boats on the South of Scotland would have eight or nine miles of lines on board, carrying 13,000 hooks, which had to be baited and shot every day. Suppose a fleet of these boats shot their lines across the tide, as was their practice. A trawler fished in an exactly opposite way. He went with the tide, going about a mile faster than the tide. Therefore, if he came on to ground occupied by the line fishermen, he must necessarily go right through the lines, and cause infinite damage; and, in a similiar manner, the same argument applied to the drift nets. There would be a mile to two miles of nets to each boat. The boats rode close by them and it would be much less difficult for a trawler to see what he was doing; but it was almost impossible for the trawler to avoid damage. Again, great damage was done by trawlers to crab and lobster pots in inshore waters. He believed that one of the great necessities for fishery legislation was to secure a certain separation between the different classes of fishermen, to secure that certain grounds should be occupied by one class, and other grounds by another class, and anything that tended towards that purpose was, he believed, sound policy. This clause was entirely in accordance with former precedents. First, the Fishery Board were given power to prohibit trawling within the three-mile limit. They took the view that they were not bound to do this, but had a discretionary power. Then an Act was passed prohibiting it entirely, and the power of prohibition was extended to the waters within a line drawn from Rattray Point to Duncansby Head. The fishing-ground it was proposed to give the Board power over under this Bill was not so extensive as that already included in the Bill of 1889, and he hoped their Lordships would look favourably on the proposal. One word with regard to the penalties proposed in this Clause 11. He must apologise to the House with regard to Sub-section 2 of that clause. It was introduced from the Bill of 1889, the Amending Act of 1890 having been forgotten. That Act changed the penalty altogether, and made the maximum £100 instead of £20, and when this Bill got into Committee, he should propose to amend the clause relating to the infliction of penalties for trawling, and take the clause of the Act of 1890 as the model on which to rest this clause. A new penalty was proposed in Clause 12—namely, to allow the Scotch Courts, if they thought fit, to remove any boat from the Register of Fishing Boats. In England it was possible to take away the certificate of the trawler. In Scotland there was no such thing as a certificate required; so the proposal was that the boat should be removed from the Register, the object being to get at the owners of the boat rather than the master, who was, after all, only the servant of the owners. At present, on failure by him to pay a fine, he would be sent to prison, and the boat could at once go off again to prohibited grounds with another master. Then the fourth point was a question of the regulation of mussel fisheries. It was impossible to exaggerate the importance of mussels as bait. The fishermen used mussels for bait, and it was computed that it was necessary to have a ton of mussels in bulk in order to catch a similar amount of fish. At present mussels were being imported from Ireland, Holland, and from the Lincolnshire fens. It was clear that the wants of Scotch fishermen ought to be met by supplies from their own mussel-beds. That much could be done in the direction of cultivating mussels was proved by the very successful results at Montrose. It was proposed, therefore, to give the Fishery Board and the District Committees power to acquire mussel-scalps in different parts of Scotland, and to work them for the benefit of the industry. He regretted the disappearance from the Bill of the clause requiring reputed owners of mussel-scalps to produce their titles. That clause, however, was not essential to the Bill, and it had been determined to reintroduce only essential provisions. He trusted that the concession made by the omission of this clause would facilitate the progress of the Bill. He submitted the measure to the House as a sincere and honest effort to deal with a most important question affecting a class of men whose work was performed under exceptionally hard and dangerous conditions. He begged to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

*THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY, who rose to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said that since he had given notice of his Amendment he had received ample proofs that he was justified in the course which he proposed to take. Every Public Body, every County Council, every Town Council in Scotland that had considered this measure had resolved unanimously to petition against it. He had himself presented that day petitions from the Town Council of Aberdeen, from the Harbour Commissioners, and from the citizens of Aberdeen in public meeting assembled against this measure. In order to prove that this was not an innocent measure, as the Lord Privy Seal represented, he would read a letter written by a gentleman well known as having taken very great interest in the Bill before their Lordships' House in 1893, to the public meeting held in Aberdeen, which, as they knew, was the great centre of the fishing trade in Scotland. Treasurer Bisset, the gentleman to whom he referred, wrote as follows—

> "I do say that it is the duty of everyone who wishes to see right prevail to oppose any further restriction until it has been proved that the restrictions already in force have benefited those in whose interests they were enacted. That the line fishermen have not benefited is clear to everybody, and to none more so than to the fishermen themselves. I have been much amused to observe how much the line fishermen regard such proposals as were contained in the last Fisheries Bill, and as appear again in the two now before Parliament. Not one fisherman in a hundred believes that any legislation that can be passed will assist them, and the only thing that will be attained will be injury to the trawl fishermen and the fish-using public. If there is one thing more than another that people who regard the interests of their country as being above that of mere party advantage should unite in doing, it is to bring home to both parties in the State that log-rolling and vote-catching by speculating with the interests of the country is not to be tolerated. If that were done, those engaged in carrying on trade

and commerce would be saved very much annoyance as well as a very large amount of valuable time and energy."

Treasurer Bisset, he might observe, was an ardent supporter of the party to which the Lord Privy Seal belonged. The noble Lord had brought forward this measure as a most innocent measure, and stated that it followed absolutely the provisions of the English Act. He would prove, however, that this Bill was dissimilar to the English measure in a most important point. There was no provision in the English measure for the election of District Fishery Committees. In England these Committees were nominated by the Board of Trade, and consequently there was no machinery for the rating of whole districts for election purposes.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH observed that the rating clauses in the two measures were identical.

*THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY asserted, that the English measure did not provide for the payment of election expenses, because in England the Committees were not elected. In England the Board of Trade nominated those who, in the opinion of the Department, were suitable representatives of the fishing interests. Consequently in England there was no election expenditure. In another respect this Bill differed from the English measure. In the latter there was a clause requiring that before making any Order, creating a fishery district, the Board of Trade should cause a draft of such Order to be locally published; and, if objections were raised to it, should cause such local inquiry to be held as might be desired. There was no such provision in this Bill, and it was proposed to put Scotch localities absolutely at the mercy of the Secretary for Scotland. They did not approve his being given the power to carve out districts as he liked, and to sanction the formation of District Committees on the application of 20 ratepayers without local inquiry. These Committees, it should be borne in mind, were to have power to impose an unlimited rate. The evidence given before the Royal Commission of 1885 went to show that if anything was to be done in the direction of improving the fishing on the coasts of Scotland it must be by some international agreement. There was a most exhaustive inquiry by the Trawling Commission of 1885, and in their Report there was not a hint in favour of District Committees. The first hint they got of them was in the Report of the Committee presided over by the noble Lord when a Member of the House of Commons, and they were recommended on evidence which, in his opinion, was not conclusive. The Fishery Board reported that it was desirable there should be an international agreement for the regulation of fishing in the North Sea, and recommended that the proper steps should be taken with that object. The question had become a burning one in the last three weeks. In answer to a question as to whether there was any objection to foreign trawlers landing fish at Scottish ports, the noble Lord said he supposed the question was a hypothetical one. It was nothing of the sort. He received a letter as late as last Saturday night in which it was stated that three German trawlers had recently arrived in Aberdeen Harbour which had been fishing within our waters. Now what did the Bill propose? At the present moment the Moray Firth was closed to our own fishermen, while it was open to those of foreign nations. And now the Lord Privy Seal proposed to take a stretch of coast from Rattray Head to the Farne Islands in Northumberland, and to exclude from the waters of the North Sea within that line, without international agreement, all home trawlers; and at the same time to leave these same waters open to Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Germans, and Norwegians. He knew his countrymen as well as most men, and he was positive, from the feelings he had heard expressed, that the Bill in its present shape would not be allowed to go much farther. He might not, perhaps, press his Motion against the Second Reading to a Division, but he should oppose the Bill at subsequent stages, and he was convinced that Scotchmen, either in this place or another place, would not allow the measure to become law.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN took notice of the statement of the noble Marquess about waters which were closed by by-laws against British trawlers being open to foreign vessels. That was a statement which ought not to pass without some comment, because the question it opened had reference not only to Scotland but to the policy of the country all over the world. He did not wish to say whether the doctrine propounded by the noble Marquess was right or wrong, but in his view it would be disastrous if it were stated as a matter of fact, without comment, that we had no possible remedy against foreign vessels fishing in waters which were prohibited to our own fishermen.

THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY: I have only made the statement that the Germans are now fishing there.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN was perfectly aware they were fishing there, but he did not wish to let the statement pass that we had no powers against them whatever. With regard to the Bill itself, in many ways he thought it a good one; especially the second part, dealing with mussel beds and clams. But with regard to the earlier part he was not at one with the noble Lord. The main principles of the Bill were three. The first was, that there should be a new constitution of the Fishery Board, and on this point he rather thought that in the interests of the Scottish fisheries it was desirable that the permanent members—that was, the members appointed by the Crown—should be in a stronger position relatively to the elected members. The second principle of the Bill was that Scotland should be divided into districts or groups of districts. These were to be settled entirely by the Secretary for Scotland.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: At the suggestion of the districts themselves in the first instance.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN did not think this proposal desirable. He should very much prefer that the fishery districts should be laid down at once and authoritatively by the Bill. The Secretary for Scotland could not force any portion of Scotland to become a fishery district against their will; and the consequence was there might be gaps which would be very undesirable. The third principle related to the question of finance. In the Bill which he introduced in 1892, and which he believed would have passed but for the General Election, the Treasury had agreed, for certain purposes, to advance public moneys for the advantage of the fishery districts of Scotland, and he should adhere very strongly to the principle there admitted by their Lordships' House. It was all very well to say that this Bill followed the similar Bill for England. But England was a much richer country. With the great wealth of the English fishery districts a rate became very small. The same relative expenditure in Scotland might mean a very large rate. He was sure it might, and there was nothing whatever in the Bill to limit the amount of the rate. It might go up to 20s. in the £. He thought it was perfectly impossible that the necessary expenditure could be carried out from rates levied in the districts. There was also the disadvantage in the proposal of the noble Lord which the Bill would not touch, that the rate in one place might be much larger than in another. Take the county of Sutherlandshire. If Scotland was divided into districts it would involve three separate groups of districts. On the East Coast there might be a small expenditure, but Sutherlandshire would be rated for that expenditure. If there was another group for the North Coast that would include the Orkneys and Shetland, for which Sutherlandshire would be rated; and then, if there was another district for the West Coast——

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: It is quite impossible for one county to be included in more than one district.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN: I beg the noble Lord's pardon. That depends entirely upon the Secretary for Scotland.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH observed that in England there were different parts of counties in different districts, but only that portion of the county which was in the particular district would be rated for that particular purpose, and a very small portion of the rate would fall upon it. The arrangement in the English case was that the amount of the rate thrown upon any particular district or borough was apportioned to the amount of representation that particular district or borough had on the District Committee.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN: In the noble Lord's Bill there is nothing of that kind. It makes the whole county responsible.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: No, no.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN thought his contention would be found to be correct. But apart from that, there were other expenses which could not be met by any rating clause in the poor districts of Scotland. There was the question of policeing and also the question of carrying out the sea provisions of the Bill, with regard to which the noble Lord was aware of the difficulties that arose. The Admiralty were supposed to be responsible for carrying out the law, but it had proved practically impossible for them to do the work. There were only two ways of doing it. One was that the Admiralty should have the command of an adequate number of ships and men to enable them to see that the law was carried out; and the other was that a sufficient sum of public money should be given to the Fishery Board in Scotland to enable them to provide ships and men for the same purpose. As a matter of fact, the Fishery Board, having no means of their own, had been able to do little or nothing, and the Admiralty had also felt themselves unable to afford the necessary number of ships and men. Nothing could be more disastrous than that the law should be in existence, passed by the authority of both Houses of Parliament and the Queen, and that that law should then be constantly broken with impunity. It was for the Treasury to provide a sufficient amount of money, so that an end might be put to such a state of things, and steps taken to see that the law was obeyed. He did not think that such a sum could be, or ought to be, raised from the rates, and the only efficient way of obtaining it was by a contribution from the public funds. He was very glad to hear that the noble Marquess did not intend to press his Motion to a Division, because nothing could be more undesirable to the interests concerned than that the present state of matters should be allowed to continue, and whatever was decided by their Lordships ought to become law this Session. Considering the differences of opinion upon many portions of the Bill, and the difficult and intricate nature of the subject, he hoped the noble Lord in charge of the Bill would consent to have it referred to a Select Committee.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN concurred, generally, with the several criticisms made on the Bill, and he also joined in the appeal to his noble Friend not to press his Motion to a Division. The course he would respectfully suggest to the House was, that this Bill should be read a second time, and then referred to a Select Committee—a course which he should also ask their Lordships to adopt in reference to a measure which he should move at a later stage. With regard to the Bill now before them, the noble Lord said it was in exact correspondence with the English Act of 1888. In that he did not think the noble Lord was correct; but the question was, not whether this Bill was in harmony with the Act which had been passed for another part of the kingdom, but how the matter should be treated in the real interests of Scotland. He admitted there was a necessity for the Bill, but the point on which it seemed to him most urgently required for Scotland was the question of the sea police, which the noble Lord had entirely omitted to refer to. He believed the great difficulty at the present time was, how to enforce the due observance of the law which now existed. All the authorities who had considered the matter had agreed that the present system of sea police in Scotland was wholly inefficient, and ought to be improved. With that he thoroughly concurred. On the question of District Committees, also, he took very much the same view as the noble Lord. He believed himself that something in the nature of District Committees must be adopted—at all events to a large proportion of Scotland; and, he also agreed generally with the noble Lord, that there must be a reconstitution of the Fishery Board. Coming to the Fishery Districts, that was a matter on which the noble Lord seemed hardly to understand his own Bill, because he told them that the extent of the district would depend partly upon the district itself. But the Bill contained this provision—

> "On the application of a County Council, or of a Town Council, the Secretary may create a Sea Fisheries District, define the limits of the district and the area chargeable."

So far as he could see, that was the whole enactment which dealt with the matter of the district. But how did the extent of the district in any way depend upon the district itself or upon the applicants? Further than that, the application for a district would not depend upon the application of the County Council or the Town Council alone, but any 20 ratepayers residing in any part of the proposed district might apply to the Secretary; and unless the County Council or Town Council which was appealed against, but which did not apply to him, could show to his satisfaction that such Order should not be made, he was to make the Order. The effect of that was, that any 20 ratepayers could apply to the Secretary to form a district, it rested with the Town and County Councils to show that a district was not required, and unless they could prove that, the Secretary was to create a district. Surely, the onus of showing there ought to be a district should be put upon the applicants, and not upon the authorities who resided within the district which was proposed to be made. He contended, therefore, that in the first place all the power was vested in the hands of the Secretary. Last year the Secretary laid before their Lordships a plan of districts which proved to be wholly unacceptable, and was rejected with universal consent. What was to hinder him under this clause putting forward exactly the same plan? He could see nothing to prevent it. With regard to the election of the Fishery District Committee, one half the members were to be delegates of Town and County Councils, and the other half were to be fishery members elected by the fishery electors, the noble Lord further proposing that all the expenses of the Act should fall upon the local rates. Did the noble Lord for one moment suppose that the local ratepayers would submit to be taxed by a committee, half of which was to consist of fishery electors, some of whom might not be ratepayers at all? Of course, they would immediately object, and the very constitution of the Committee so proposed made it an absolute impossibility, because it stood to reason, that if a district was to be taxed every ratepayer would properly insist upon having a vote in regard to his own taxability. The noble Lord also said that in regard to the elections the Bill was on all fours with the English Act. But it was nothing of the kind. Half of the district Committees in England were nominated by the Board of Trade, and there was no election at all. But the most important question was the question of the expense of putting the Bill into operation. The noble Lord said not one word in reference to the rate, nor did he mention the purposes for which the rate was to be proposed. As he read the Bill, the whole of the costs of all sorts and descriptions which might be incurred under the Bill were to fall on the local rates of the district. There was no limit whatever to the local rate that might be imposed. It was quite clear the noble Lord intended that the district should be rated for the money required for the purchase of mussel-beds. But supposing police were required, did the noble Lord mean that the rates of the district should provide the necessary vessels. As he had said before, the want of an efficient police service was really the difficulty of the Scotch fishing question; and, if they were to understand that the vessels were to be provided out of the local rates, he wondered where in the districts in the North and West of Scotland the noble Lord would find sufficient property to rate for procuring vessels which were undoubtedly required for the maintenance of the law. No Commission or Committee had ever suggested that those matters should be done out of the local rates. The Commission of 1885 made no such suggestion; the Committee of the noble Lord himself in 1893 made no such suggestion; and, as he understood, the first time it was proposed to lay the whole of the expenses which might be incurred under the Fisheries Act on the districts was by the Government Bill of last year. The noble Lord proposed to give the District Committees power to make bye-laws in certain cases. He thought it was better to restrict the power to make bye-laws to the Central Fishery Board. But that was a matter of detail for discussion at a later period. He did not wish to take exception to the Second Reading, but he hoped the noble Lord would consent to refer the Bill to a Select Committee.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH said, he thought the best answer to the criticisms made on the Bill was that the provisions in regard to the District Committees had been in force in England for seven years, and had worked most admirably. He admitted that there was one considerable difference, namely, that after 1898 the members of the Fishery District Committees were elected, instead of being appointed by the Secretary of Scotland, as they were appointed in England by the Board of Trade. The orders made by the Board of Trade for the constitution of fishery districts in England depended to a large extent on the representations which had been made by the various local authorities in those districts. Any representations from the various local authorities in Scotland in regard to the fishery districts that might be constituted would, of course, be considered by the Secretary for Scotland, and, therefore, when noble Lords hinted at difficulties about the constitution of districts they were but trying to conjure up difficulties that were not to be found within the four corners of the Bill. With regard to the question of finance, noble Lords had forgotten that Scotland was in a different position from England, because it had a Fishery Board which was supplied with funds from Imperial sources. He agreed with much that had been said as to the necessity of greater funds being placed at the disposal of the Fishery Board for police, but the amount of the charge that would be thrown on the District Committees would be very much diminished by the fact that already a considerable charge, borne by the Fishery Board, came out of Imperial funds. It seemed to him an extraordinary proposal that the whole of the expenses of District Committees, elected locally to deal with purely local matters with regard to fisheries, should be defrayed out of Imperial funds. Some of them on that side of the House took exception to a proposal made by the late Government in respect to grants in aid for local purposes; but here was a proposal to constitute District Committees locally elected, and supply them with funds from Imperial sources.

The Marquess of LOTHIAN said, that was not his proposal. His proposal with regard to contributions from Imperial funds was confined to the expenses for police and to the purchase of mussel-beds.

*Lord TWEEDMOUTH pointed out that, with regard to the purchase of mussel-beds, there was an alternative. It was not necessary that the District Committee should purchase mussel-beds; the Fishery Board had also the power under the Bill—the Fishery Board with Imperial funds, and the Local Board with local funds.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN: Where in the Bill is the money provided for the purchase of mussel-beds?

*Lord TWEEDMOUTH admitted that the Bill did not provide the money. That was a matter for the Treasury, and it was open to the Treasury to increase the grant to the Fishery Board. But it was out of the ordinary course for the House to make the proposal.

The Marquess of LOTHIAN: It was made by the House, and passed by the House for the very same purpose in 1892.

*Lord TWEEDMOUTH: Not for the purchase of mussel-beds?

The Marquess of LOTHIAN: Yes, for the purchase of mussel-beds.

*Lord TWEEDMOUTH said, that with regard to the question of elections, he did not think there would be found any serious difficulty in holding the elections at the same time as the triennial County Council elections. The noble Marquess who moved the rejection of the Bill quoted the Report of a Committee of which he (Lord Tweedmouth) was Chairman, with reference to the necessity for a Convention with Foreign Powers. But that Committee did not consider any of the questions dealt with in the Bill at all. It was a Committee appointed to inquire into the method and desirability of prohibiting the sale and capture of immature fish, and they said they thought it would be desirable that a Convention should be entered into with foreign Powers, so that the same rule should apply to all nationalities fishing in the North Sea. He might say the Government were going to introduce a Bill on the subject without any such convention, of which the provisions would apply to British subjects alone. The whole point of the noble Marquess' criticism proceeded from the fear that some of his trawling friends in Aberdeen might be unduly interfered with; but he did not think the restrictions of the Bill would interfere very largely with their powers or their profits. He would be glad to refer the Bill to a Select Committee—not to take evidence, but to discuss its proposals.

*Lord BALFOUR said, that as the noble Lord seemed to rest his case for the Bill on the ground of its supposed similarity to the English Act of 1888, he should like to say that the objection which they felt to the provisions of the Bill, taken as a whole, was that although they corresponded in some particulars with the English Act, they did not contain some of the safeguards that existed in the English measure. If the noble Lord would look carefully at the phraseology of Sub-clause 3 of Clause 5, he would find that as to the formation of fishery districts there was not the same discretion given to the Secretary for Scotland as was given to the President of the Board of Trade, though the noble Lord seemed to intend that the discretion should be the same. The noble Lord had quite fairly stated that in England the representatives of fishery interests were nominated by the President of the Board of Trade, and he (Lord Balfour) agreed that that system was not altogether applicable to Scotland. But on the other hand there was a wide difference between a power of rating to persons carefully selected and giving it to persons elected solely by people who were directly interested in spending as much money as possible; and therefore they had reason to look carefully into those provisions of the Bill which proposed what might be a practically unlimited rate for a great variety of objects, many of which were not comprised within the English Act. He agreed that the cost of the machinery for carrying out the fishery district elections and the salaries of officers were legitimate local charges. He did not object to it, and would not object to it, provided there was some guarantee that it would be reasonable, and there would be some check on the expenditure to be incurred. There was no provision in the English Act for speculation in mussels; and he objected to power being given in that respect to the Scotch District Committees. But he thought there was a way out of it; and it was a matter he would prefer to discuss on the Select Committee. After the discussion that had taken place he would not touch on trawling and other matters. But he asked the Lord Privy Seal to look carefully at the Clauses which dealt with bye-laws. They were wholly different from the English clauses, and in his humble opinion, they were absolutely unworkable and unintelligible in their present form. In England all bye-laws were made by the Local Committees, and must be confirmed by the Board of Trade. Under the Bill as it stood, some might be made by the local committees and there was no exact provision for their confirmation. Some of the bye-laws were to be made by the Fishery Board, and these had to be confirmed by the Secretary of State for Scotland. But the by-laws to be made by the local committees under Clause 9 were intended to be copied from the English Act, which certainly provided some confirmation by the central authority.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: Subject to regulations made in that behalf by the Fishery Board.

*LORD BALFOUR: But there was no definite provision for their confirmation, and he would tell their Lordships what objections he had to this. The Committees had within their districts the same powers under Clause 9 as the Fishery Board had under Clauses 10 and 11. The powers were to be much the same as in England. But the Board of Trade had no power to make any bye-laws themselves. Their duties were confined to confirmation, and did not extend to making bye-laws. He ventured to think that some authority, which was not itself concerned with the making of bye-laws, should be responsible for the confirmation of those made by the local committees, and surely the Secretary for Scotland, or even the Board of Trade—which had jurisdiction in Scotland, as well as in England, in many matters—should have some voice in it? Then the penalties which were to be imposed upon those convicted of the offence of trawling in closed waters were unduly severe under the Bill. As he understood Clause 12, it gave powers which did not exist under any other Act, and increased the penalty to £100. This would be a matter for consideration in Committee. He was glad to hear the Lord Privy Seal say that he would be willing that a Select Committee should be appointed to consider the Bill. He joined with the noble Lord in expressing the hope that, although there was much divergence of opinion as to the methods by which certain objects of the Bill were to be carried out, there would not be so much divergence as to the objects aimed at as might appear from the discussion that had taken place.

THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY said, that if the Bill were to be referred to a Select Committee he would suggest whether the Committee might not be empowered to take evidence from the Officials of the Fishery Board and the Board of Trade? His experience of the workings of the English Act was entirely the reverse of that of the noble Lord, and he wanted to know how a Select Committee of their Lordships could come to a conclusion unless they heard the evidence of the officials he had mentioned.

*Lord TWEEDMOUTH said, he could not consent to the suggestion, as it was a condition that the Committee should not be a Committee to take evidence.

Motion agreed to, and Bill referred to a Select Committee.

SEA FISHERIES REGULATION (SCOTLAND) (NO. 2) BILL.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said, that after the discussion that had taken place it would only be necessary for him to detain their Lordships a few minutes in explaining the Bill. Like the Bill of the Lord Privy Seal, this Bill had reference to the reconstitution of the Fishery Board, the constitution of district committees, and it also contained provisions as to the manner in which bye-laws were to be made and costs defrayed under the Act. In the first place, the Board was to consist of three members appointed by the Crown and certain other members to be nominated. In a later clause, it proposed that each District Committee shall send one member to the Board. Clause 5 was important, providing as it did that the charges and expenses to be incurred by the Fishery Board—which was by the Bill made the sole disbursing and accounting body under the Act—should be defrayed by money provided by Parliament. In making that provision, he had specially in his mind the expenses that would fall on the board with reference to Clause 26, which provided that they might provide, by officers, vessels, and otherwise, for the more efficient watching of the sea near the coast of Scotland. There was no such provision in the Bill of his noble Friend. In Clause 6 they came to the question of fishery districts, and he proposed that these districts should be in such numbers as appeared advisable, and composed of such parishes as might be named in each order. If he were proposing any local rate the question of stating which parishes should be comprised within a district, and which should not, would be important. But as the Bill contained no proposal for local rating the question became a secondary one, and one which affected only those parishes really interested in fishing. Then it was proposed that the election should take place on the same day and in the same way as the elections of parish councils, and that the expenditure incurred should be defrayed as if incurred in the election of parish councils. The Fishery Board were to be the only persons to remunerate officers and to provide money for the purchase of mussel beds and other expenses under the Act. There was another rather important provision in his Bill—that all bye-laws were to be made, in the first instance, by the Fishery Board, subject to confirmation by the Secretary for Scotland. Clause 17 dealt with the question of titles. The Lord Privy Seal had given great prominence to the dislike which this House had to the clause in the Bill of last year which said that all titles were to be exhibited. But according to his recollection that was not the sole or even the main reason.

*Lord TWEEDMOUTH: It was one reason.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN: This excellent reason—it introduced a principle of law which, as far as he knew, had never been heard of before. The noble Lord's extraordinary proposal was that everyone should exhibit his title within two years, and if he did not exhibit it within that time the mussel bed in question was to belong to the Crown, and, if, further, any public authority—such as the Commissioners of Woods and Forests—felt any doubt with regard to the validity of a title, the person claiming it was to be obliged to bring an action to show the property belonged to him. He was not surprised at anyone objecting to such an unjust proposal. At the same time no one would wish to protect a man in the possession of property to which he had no title. The matter was dealt with in Clause 17 of the Bill which, while it provided for the same object was free from the objection which the clause of the noble Lord's Bill of last year appeared to have. Then this Bill expressly excluded salmon. There was nothing in the noble Lord's Bill which did so.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH : Yes.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: Well, it would be a matter for Committee. If their Lordships read the Bill a second time, he suggested that it should be referred to the same Select Committee as the other Bill.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH thought it would confuse the issues before the Select Committee if this Bill were referred to it as well as the other. In many respects the Bill very much resembled his own, and included provisions which, if not identical, were similar to them. As far as these went, it was not worth while having the two Bills before them. With regard to others he could not possibly adopt them or be responsible for a Bill in which they were inserted, and he did not think it worth while to bring them before the Committee. He could not consent to the expenditure of the Local Committees being thrown upon imperial funds, and, after all, that was what was done by this Bill. Then he took exception to the method adopted for the formation of the District Committees, and the severance of the fishery interests of the county from all other county interests, The industries of a county, whether agricultural, fishing or manufacturing, affected all dwellers in the county. To say that fishery interests were to be dealt with only by people representing the fishery interests, was to take a very separatist view of the conditions existing in any county.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: There is no rating.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH said, whether there was rating or not, the question of the fisheries was of great importance to Scotland, and in the several counties the fisheries ought to be matters of interest and concern to all dwellers in the county. In the great county of Aberdeen the annual value of the fish landed was greater than the whole land rental of the county. Surely the fishery industry was of sufficient importance to be dealt with by the county as a whole, rather than by the representatives of the interest dwelling in particular parishes scattered here and there in the county. It was for their Lordships to say whether the two Bills should be sent to the same Select Committee, but he would greatly deprecate that course, and he would ask the noble Earl to postpone the second reading until after the Select Committee had reported their first Bill, then the noble Earl would be able to propose such Amendments as he thought fit.

THE EARL OF GALLOWAY said he heard with regret the remarks of the Lord Privy Seal. It seemed to him to be the more natural consequence that this Bill should be referred to the same Select Committee as the first. He had had a correspondence with those represented in an important part of Scotland, and he could not see that there were any grounds for objecting to the course proposed. The noble Lord admitted that he approved of part of the Bill, and it would only be fair play to refer it to the same Select Committee.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN acknowledged the conciliatory tone adopted by the Lord Privy Seal. Of course this Bill differed essentially from the first; but at the same time he would suggest that the noble Lord should not persist in his objection to the proposal of the noble Earl. What the noble Lord had stated need not operate in a very hostile manner to the course proposed. For himself, he should not think it right to support any proposal that local expenditure should be borne out of public funds. But that was only one point, and as to the other point, the noble Lord had somewhat magnified its difficulty, because the whole question was to rest with the Secretary for Scotland, who would include any parishes that ought fairly to bear any part of the burden, and would probably include the whole of Scotland. These were matters for discussion by the Select Committee.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH said, he would suggest that the Bill should be read a second time, but its reference to the Select Committee should be postponed till it was seen how the Committee got on with the first Bill; the two Bills could not be considered together.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: That would not meet my views, I beg to say.

Bill read 2ª. [No. 30.]

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN moved, that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

Motion agreed to.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BILL.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (LORD HERSCHELL) moved the second reading of this Bill, stating that its object was to apply the Act of 1868 to documents issued from the Local Government Board, the point having been omitted by oversight when certain powers of the Privy Council were transferred to the Board of Agriculture.

Bill read 2ª.

SEED POTATOES (IRELAND) BILL.

Bill brought from the Commons, and read 1ª. [No. 30.]

House adjourned at Half-past Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 4th March 1895.

The House met shortly after Three of the clock.

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT RAILWAY BILL.

On the Order for Second Reading,

*MAJOR DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said, he desired a statement of the Government's policy in regard to this Bill. The Railway was at present charging illegal fares, and the object of the Bill was simply to whitewash these illegal fares. He would briefly state the history of the case. The subject had been before the House for nearly two years. He raised the question in March 1893, and was then told that the whole question would be referred to a Committee. He thought the Board of Trade ought to have known that a Committee had no power to decide rights of this sort. He raised the question by a letter to the Board of Trade, and was told that the Board had no power whatever to act. He afterwards raised the question on the Estimates and was told that the Board of Trade had ample power to act. So far the Board of Trade had made two serious mistakes in dealing with this question. In September 1893, he was told that care would be taken to look into the whole matter. The matter was afterwards further postponed owing to the indisposition of the Treasury Counsel. He had subsequently, in September 1894, received a courteous intimation from the President of the Board of Trade saying that the matter would be put before the Law Officers again. In answer to a question in February 1895, his right hon. Friend said he had endeavoured to make a satisfactory arrangement with the Railway Company, but had failed, and had been obliged to instruct his solicitor. That was an extraordinary answer for a Government Department to give. What was to be the policy of the Board of Trade? If he was wrong, and these fares were perfectly legal, he could only express his regret for bringing the matter forward, but, in that case, he thought the District Railway Company had some ground of complaint, for the delay made it very difficult for them to act. It was possible that the action which the Board of Trade were bringing, to contest the legality of their fares, might not be concluded until after the Bill had been dealt with by the House; and he asked whether it was a satisfactory state of things that a Committee on the Bill should be considering the question of a redistribution of fares when the result of the action might show that the present fares charged were illegal. It was probable that if this Bill became law the legal proceedings pending might prove to be altogether illusory. At any rate, the present state of things in regard to this Railway was very unsatisfactory, and he repeated that there was reason to complain of the dilatory action of the Board of Trade. He had no interest direct or indirect in the Company, and he had drawn attention to the matter purely on public grounds and in the interests of the working classes, by whom this Railway was largely used.

MR. H. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said, the hon. and gallant Member had shown no substantial reasons against the Second Reading of the Bill. He had full power and opportunity of bringing any complaint or grievance he wished to urge before the Committee on the Bill. The hon. Member had complained that the matter had been two years in the hands of the Board of Trade, but if the Company had been acting illegally, the Board had had power to come down on them. Moreover, the Board had power at any time to stop the Bill if it appeared to sanction illegal fares, and in those circumstances he saw no reason for them troubling the House with the matter. The present Bill was not confined to the question of fares; it related to other matters of public utility, and it was a fact that this very question had been investigated by a Committee in 1893. That Committee sanctioned a readjustment of fares in order to bring them under a uniform mileage, and the Company were seeking similar powers under the present Bill.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, the Bill was not retrospective, and the Second Reading would prove no bar to legal proceedings. He understood that the Committee would thoroughly investigate the Bill, and that the County Council and Board of Trade would be represented before them. The public interest, therefore, would not be unrepresented.

MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said, it appeared to him that if the Committee were empowered to revise and readjust the fares, the matters under discussion might well be referred to them.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said, he noticed that his hon. Friend had not submitted any Motion to the House, and, therefore, he did not understand that he wished to move the rejection of the Bill. The hon. Member urged that it was the duty of the Board of Trade to determine whether the fares referred to were legal or not, and whether some other arrangement could not be made. The only reason for any apparent delay on the part of the Board was, that if the fares had been declared to be illegal, the Company would probably have charged up to their maximum, and that would have involved much more inconvenience to the public. The Committee, in dealing with the Bill, would not be constituted into a Court of Law, to decide on the legality, or illegality of the fares; their object and purpose would be to endeavour to determine the best arrangement that could be made. If they went to court, all they could do would be to obtain an injunction restraining the Company from charging the present fares. The Committee would not say what fares were legal, and that question therefore would still remain. He thought in the circumstances it was reasonable that the Bill should be sent to a Committee which would investigate the whole circumstances, and determine what was an equitable scale of charges to be made by this Company. This had net been done before, because on a previous occasion the Company withdrew its Bill, and the Committee had no opportunity of determining the question. If the Company adopted that course on the present occasion, the Board of Trade would take steps to obtain a legal decision. But he thought the present discussion would have the effect of impressing upon the Company that the matter had reached a stage at which it was proper that these fares should be reviewed.

Bill read 2°.

LAMBETH WATER (TRANSFER) BILL.

The adjourned Debate on Mr. J. Stuart's Motion:—

> "That any County Council and any of the London Water Companies, be entitled to be heard before the Select Committee on the above Bill, on any Petitions praying to be heard by Counsel presented by them, on or before March 14th next, and that such Petitions be referred to the said Committee;"

and on Mr. E. W. Byrne's Amendment thereto—to insert after "County," the words, "or District," was resumed.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said, he had conferred with the hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment, and he had seen the Parliamentary Agent for the majority of the District Councils interested; and he had prepared a form of words which had been agreed upon, the effect of which was that any District Council or local authority who had petitioned within the limits allowed by the Standing Orders, should not only have a *locus standi* in respect of the Bill affecting its own locality, but should also have a *locus standi* in respect of the Lambeth and Southwark Bills; the restriction being, that they should be heard by the Committee if and so far as the Committee thought fit. The promoters felt it was only fair that the Committee should itself have some voice in the matter. The words he proposed to add to his Motion, in order to carry out this arrangement, were :—

> "That the District Council or other local authority of any district within the area of any of the London Water Companies, who have within the time limited by the Standing Orders, presented Petitions against any of the Bills for acquiring the undertaking of the said Companies, shall be entitled to be heard by Counsel upon such Petitions against the Bills to which they relate, and have leave also to present Petitions praying to be heard by Counsel at any time not later than the 14th day of March, against the Lambeth Water (Transfer) Bill, and that any such Petitions be referred to the said Committee, and that the Petitioners be entitled to be heard by Counsel before the Select Committee, if and so far as the Select Committee may think fit."

It was not the object of the promoters to interpose any technical difficulties, their object was to give a reasonable *locus standi* to persons who were likely to be concerned; and they felt that the proposal he had made really met the circumstances of the case.

MR. EDMUND W. BYRNE (Essex, Walthamstow) thought, speaking generally, the proposal of the hon. Member was reasonable, and he was prepared to withdraw his Amendment provided the words "who have presented Petitions" meant "who have, or may within the time limited, present Petitions." What they wanted was, that all the Local Authorities who had the right to petition, and in due time did petition, against any one of the other Bills, the consideration of which was postponed, should have the right to present Petitions, and be heard by Counsel, against the Lambeth and Southwark Bills, so far as the Committee might think fit.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said, that he also was prepared, in view of the concession the hon. Member had made, to withdraw his Amendment. But he would point out that there existed a *Locus Standi* Committee, before which persons claimed *locus standi* as a right and not as a privilege. He objected to the Committee that was to decide on the merits of the Bill deciding also the question of *locus standi.* He, therefore, thought the words providing that the Petitioners should only be heard subject to the approval of the Committee should be omitted, and that these Local Authorities should be granted a *locus standi* in the ordinary course.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) said, he proposed to move an Amendment, including the Conservancy of the River Thames within the scope of the Motion.

MR. J. STUART said, he had been informed that the Thames Conservancy had a *locus standi.* He could give the assurance that the promoters would raise no objection on the point; and if it were found that he was wrong, he was quite prepared to move at a later time.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND said, the Thames Conservancy were informed that at present they had no *locus standi.*

MR. H. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said, the effect of the proposal now made would be to cast on the Referee the duty of ascertaining, strictly and technically, whether, under the Standing Order, the Petitioners had a *locus standi*, whereas he understood the arrangement to be that all persons who felt, and were prepared to make out, a case of grievance on the merits should be allowed to be heard without reference to the Referee on the question of technical *locus standi.*

MR. BYRNE said, by way of explanation, that what he understood was meant was, that District Councils, and other Local Authorities, were to be put on exactly the same footing as the County Councils mentioned in the original Motion.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) asked whether the hon. Gentleman opposite would accept the Amendment?

MR. STUART said, local authorities and district councils had a *locus standi* upon Bills which related to their own districts, and could not be interfered with. There were also a number of local authorities, say in the East London district, who wished to have a *locus standi* upon this Lambeth Bill, and it was felt that any of those who thought it worth their while to petition against the East London Bill should have a *locus standi* against the Lambeth Bill as well, but in the case of those who had not thought it worth while to petition there was no reason why they should have a *locus standi.* He must ask, however, to be allowed to retain the words at the end of the Clause, "if and so far as the Select Committee think fit," because there were many of these local authorities from the

East London district which might very well be grouped together; but this proposal, as it stood, would not let in all the aggrieved persons as suggested by the hon. Member for Wandsworth. He was not disposed to accept the Amendment, but pointed out that endeavours had been made from the first to fairly meet those who wanted a *locus standi* in this Lambeth Bill.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) suggested that this matter should be adjourned until some definite instructions were obtained from the new County Council. This Bill originated in the late body, but since they gave the hon. Gentleman opposite a certain amount of authority to act for them, circumstances had changed. They had no right to take the hon. Member's *ipse dixit* on the matter; and he moved the postponement of the discussion until the new Council had had an opportunity of giving what instructions they might have to give respecting it.

Mr. E. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.) said, he had represented the minority of the Council for the last six years, but now he might be representing the majority. He thought, however, that the proposition of his colleague on the Council was a fair one, and it was hardly worth while that the settlement of this small point should be delayed, especially as the hon. Member did not draw the limit to those who had already petitioned.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY said, he did not wish to press the Amendment, but was anxious to know exactly where they were.

Mr. W. L. JACKSON (Leeds, N.) asked, whether it would not be convenient to have this matter postponed until to-morrow, seeing the confusion that had arisen. The hon. Member would then have an opportunity of placing on the Paper what he proposed.

Mr. T. F. HALSEY (Herts, Watford) thought it would be better if the hon. Member for Shoreditch fixed a later day, say the 19th instead of the 14th, because just about the earlier date the County Councils would be in the throes of another election, and it would be almost impossible for them to decide whether they would petition under this Resolution. It would be a great convenience if that hon. Member would make the alteration.

Mr. J. STUART expressed his willingness to meet the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, and allow the Debate to stand over until to-morrow.

Sir F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) moved the adjournment of the Debate until Thursday.

Mr. J. STUART said, it was desirable to have the matter settled as soon as possible.

Debate adjourned until Thursday.

MOTIONS.

GLASGOW CORPORATION AND POLICE BILL.

Mr. J. PARKER SMITH moved—

"That all Petitions against this Bill, presented on or before the 18th March, be referred to the Committee; and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses be heard on their Petitions against the Bill, if they think fit, and counsel heard in support of the said Biil against such Petitions."—(*By Order.*)

Motion agreed to.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS BILL.

Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to give notice that, on the Second Reading of the Factories and Workshops Bill, I shall move an Instruction to the Committee empowering them to insert in the Bill provisions to extend it to the Post Office and other Government Departments, and to prohibit the importation into the United Kingdom of goods manufactured in the prisons of foreign countries.

DISBURSEMENTS OF THE HOME TREASURY.

On Motion of Sir W. Wedderburn, an Address was agreed to for a Statement showing the Disbursements of the Home Treasury in each year from 1874–5 to 1893–4, inclusive, and the mode in which provision was made for those disbursements.

QUESTIONS.

VOLUNTEERS AND THE GUARDS.

Colonel C. E. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if, having regard to the beneficial results to officers and men, and to the fact that in the event of the Volunteer Force of London being called upon it would have to act with battalions of Guards, and under those commanding officers of Guards Regiments by whom they are now brigaded, he will consider the expediency of classing them as Volunteer Battalions of the several Guards Regiments, instead of attaching them to corps, however distinguished, with which they have no territorial connection?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs): This subject was very fully considered a few years ago, and the conclusion arrived at was that the balance of advantage lay in not disturbing the present arrangement.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that, under existing arrangements, officers and sergeants of the Guards had no opportunity of being employed as adjutants and instructors of Volunteer corps?

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said that point had been considered too, but there were arguments which could be urged against it.

RECREATION GROUNDS.

Mr. R. B. MARTIN (Worcester, Droitwich): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, under Section 8, Sub-section (1), Clause (b) of the Local Government Act, 1894, Parish Councils have the right to hire land for a recreation ground, or are they compelled to purchase land for that purpose?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Bradford, Central): The Local Government Board consider that Section 8 (1) (b) of the Local Government Act, 1894, confers on a Parish Council the right either to hire or to purchase land for the purpose of a recreation ground.

LIFT ACCIDENTS.

Mr. WALTER HAZELL (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the report of an inquest, held in the Coroner's Court of the City of London, on 28th February, upon the death of Mr. C. T. Read, who was killed by the falling of a lift in Lloyd's Office on the 25th February; whether he observed that the jury recommended that the lifts should be fitted with automatic apparatus to prevent lifts from falling when similar accidents occur; and whether he is prepared to introduce Legislation to make the use of such apparatus (which is at present used widely and successfully) compulsory throughout the United Kingdom?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. Asquith, Fife, E.): The supervision and inspection of lifts and similar apparatus in offices and private houses is not, in my opinion, a duty which ought to be undertaken by the Central Government. It ought to be dealt with, if at all, by the Local Authorities. I will give ample consideration to any proposals which may be made, but the Government cannot themselves undertake Legislation on the subject.

THE BHOUSLA FUND.

Sir W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, at the annexation of Nagpur, the private personal property of the Rajah was sold by Government, and converted into a fund of about 29 lakhs of rupees for the maintenance of the family, under the name of the Bhousla Fund; whether this fund has been accredited to Government without the consent of the Rajah; and whether the Secretary of State has received a memorial on the subject, addressed to him by the Rajah through the Government of India in October last?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. H. H. Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.): The fund referred to was created in 1854 as part of the arrangements consequent upon the lapse of the Nagpur State. It consisted of the proceeds of the sale of jewels and other property, and was intended to provide pensions for the members of the late

Court, apart from the special provision made for the father of the present memorialist. The fund originally amounted to 29 lakhs, but owing to payments which had to be made, on capital account, this had to be reduced to 17 lakhs in 1864. And in that year, as it was clear that the income of the fund was quite insufficient to bear the charges upon it, it was decided to wind it up. The amount of the fund was credited to Government, and the pensions chargeable to it have been since paid from the general revenues of the country. A memorial from the Rajah of Deor, dated 8th September 1894, dealing with this among other subjects, has been considered by me in Council. The despatch conveying my decision went to India by mail of 1st March; but I may take this opportunity to say that I have declined to interfere on the memorialist's behalf.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India (1) whether the site and remains of the ancient palace of the Bhousla family at Nagpur have, in spite of the Rajah's written protest, been recently handed over to the municipality for the purpose of erecting a town hall; (2) whether the Government of India had previously declared in writing that the Rajah's occupation of the palace would never be disturbed so long as he paid a barley-corn rent, and executed the repairs; and (3) whether the Rajah has stated his willingness to pay the rent and execute the repairs rendered necessary by an accidental fire?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: The information in my possession is to the following effect. In 1862 the then Rajah of Deor was informed that the palace referred to by my hon. Friend belonged to the State, but that he and his relatives would be permitted to occupy it on condition that he kept it in repair, and paid a barley-corn rent. The fire referred to in the last paragraph of the question took place in 1864, and the palace was burnt down. With the sanction of the Government of India, other arrangements were then made for the accommodation of the Rajah and his relatives, a new palace being built on a fresh site, which was also State property. At the same time, the site of the old palace was declared to be at the disposal of the Government; a part of it

was utilised accordingly for the permanent occupation of a normal school. I understand that the site has now been handed over to the municipality for the erection of a town hall.

ALLOTMENTS.

MR. C. HOBHOUSE (Wilts, Devizes): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether it is within the powers of a Parish Council to require applicants for Allotments under the Local Government Act, 1894, to sign an agreement to pay all the preliminary charges of valuation of land, &c., before the Council applied for land for Allotments; and, whether all such charges are not properly payable by the Parish Council?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. G. RUSSELL, North Beds) for Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I have no authority to determine this question; but the Local Government Act does not appear to me to contain any provision enabling a Parish Council to require agreements of the kind referred to be entered into.

IRISH REGISTRATION OF TITLES OFFICE.

SIR T. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he is aware that there is great delay in the issue of certificates in the Registration of Titles Office under the Local Registration of Titles Act, 1891, and what is the cause of the delay; (2) whether the Land Commission stated they would register free of cost all those who lodged their application within 12 months of the date of the Act, and whether cases registered are registered subject to equities, and thus give the applicants no better title than before, but add complications; and (3) whether he is aware that sales of property are prevented in consequence of this?

MR. G. RUSSELL: I am informed by the Land Commission, and by the Registrar of Titles, that any delays which may have arisen in the Registration of Tenant Purchasers' Titles are due to the apathy of the parties themselves, and not to the working of the Act of 1891 by the department of the Chief Registrar. In 6,000 out of 7,827 cases sent direct by the tenant purchasers to the Registrar of

Titles the applicants have not sent replies to the requisitions issued. In those cases in which the applicants have replied registration is being rapidly effected. In 1,460 out of 2,170 applications by Land Commission rulings have been made, and the balance of 710 is being reduced at the rate of about 100 per week. The Land Commision did issue such a circular as is referred to in the second paragraph; but in it they distinctly informed every tenant purchaser, that they could not register the title to the tenant's interest and the burdens thereon, which existed prior to the date of the conveyance, or vesting order, by which the Land Commission vested the holding in the purchaser under the Purchase Acts. All the cases registered by the Land Commission are registered subject to equities. Both the Registrar and the Land Commission are of opinion that such registration confers a great benefit on tenant purchasers, who can clear their titles and discharge the equities at any time. As regards the last paragraph, both the Land Commission and the Registrar are also of opinion that such registration does not prevent sales of property, as on a sale the tenant purchaser would have to prove his title, and discharge any claims or equities which might have attached to his holding.

PARCEL POST RATES.

Mr. WALTER HAZELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether the large proportion of the Parcel Post Receipts, now taken by the Railway Companies, would in any way prevent the introduction into London, and other populous places, of the system now in operation in Paris, by which a parcel posted in that city will be delivered anywhere in Paris at the rate of 11 lbs. for 2½d., against 1s. 6d. for a similar service in London?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Arnold Morley, Nottingham, E.): The Railway Companies receive a share of the Parcel Post Receipts in respect only of parcels which actually pass over the railway system. The receipts on parcels wholly road-borne are not divided with the Railway Companies. The introduction of reduced rates for local parcels would, however, be contrary to the principle of uniform rates irrespective of distances, which was laid down by Sir Rowland Hill, and which has ever since been applied to the carriage of postal matter.

VOTERS' LISTS IN IRELAND.

Mr. D. SHEEHY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he is aware that, in the Return (No. 300) showing the amounts received by the county and borough treasurers in Ireland from the clerks of the peace in respect of the sale of copies of the registers of voters and supplemental lists, no receipts appear to have been credited for the years noted in the Return for the counties of Westmeath, Cork, and Galway, and the boroughs of Cork and Galway; (2) whether it is the practice of the clerks of the peace in these constituencies to charge for copies as required by Statute; and could he explain why the amounts have not been placed to the credit of the county and borough treasurers respectively; (3) whether he can state if, in any of these cases, any moneys have been credited since the passing of the Act requiring the same to be done in 1850; and how it has happened that the responsible auditors of the Local Government Board, who audit the Grand Jury accounts twice a year, have not called attention to the matter; (4) whether he is also aware that in the Return no sum appears anywhere audited under the heading of "Fines" for bogus claims and objections, although it is notorious that these are made in thousands annually; and (5) who is to blame for the neglect?

Mr. G. RUSSELL: The fact is as stated in the first paragraph. As regards the second paragraph, the present clerk of the crown and peace for Westmeath was only appointed in January last, and he cannot answer as to the practice in past years, there being, he states, no materials in his office to enable him to give the information. With regard to the County Cork, the clerk of the peace states that no copies of the Parliamentary lists were supplied in the years 1891 or 1893; but that, in the year 1892, a sum of £9 8s. 6d. was received by him, which, I am informed by the treasurer, was only lodged to the credit of the county on the 17th of August last. As regards Galway County, the clerk of the peace received various sums of money amounting in all to £26 10s. 9d. for the sale of copies of the registers in the years 1891, 1892, and 1893, and this amount was only lodged to the credit of the county treasurer on the 21st instant. In the case of the borough of Cork, the town clerk states that it has been the practice to supply copies of the lists free of charge, and in the case of the borough of Galway, sums amounting to £1 12s. 6d. were realised by the sales of lists in 1892 and 1893, which were only lodged to the credit of the treasurer since the Return in question was presented to Parliament. There appears to have been very considerable delay in lodging these moneys to the credit of the county treasurers, and the matter will be further and closely inquired into. The clerks of the peace for the counties and boroughs mentioned in the question state that no fines for bogus claims and objections have been imposed in the years mentioned. There has not been sufficient time to make inquiries from the officials of the other counties, but the matter will be carefully and fully investigated. With respect to the third paragraph, I am informed that the accounts of clerks of the crown and peace in all transactions under the Franchise and Jurors Acts are audited by the secretary to the grand jury, or such other person as shall be appointed in that behalf by the grand jury. Adequate powers are bestowed upon the person so appointed, to procure all necessary evidence to satisfy himself of the accuracy of the accounts submitted to him. The result comes before the Auditor of the Local Government Board, fiated by the Judge of Assize, and must be accepted by him, as he has no discretion in the matter. The question of check on these payments primarily, therefore, devolves upon the person appointed by the grand jury.

THE SHRIEVALTY OF COUNTY KILKENNY.

Mr. G. W. WOLFF (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received from Mr. E. K. B. Tighe a protest against his appointment as High Sheriff for the County Kilkenny, on the ground that he is domiciled in Norfolk, is candidate for the Parliamentary representation of North-west Norfolk, and that the other gentlemen were returned as eligible for the office by the Judge of Assize, one of whom had undertaken to act if called upon to do so; whether it is usual so exempt Parliamentary candidates from service as High Sheriffs in Ireland; and, whether he will reconsider the matter, with a view to appointing one of the other gentlemen whose names have been forwarded by the Judge of Assize to the Government?

Mr. VESEY KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in cases such as that in Kilkenny, brought to hisnotice by the hon. Member for East Belfast, when the person nominated as High Sheriff by the customary method is obviously unsuited for the post, he will advise the Lord Lieutenant to exercise his statutory power, and appoint a High Sheriff acceptable to the mass of the people?

Mr. G. RUSSELL: The name of Mr. Tighe was returned first in the list of gentlemen eligible for the office of High Sheriff for Kilkenny. He was informed of this on the 15th January, but that if the second gentleman on the list, within a week's time, wrote to the Castle expressing his willingness to serve instead of Mr. Tighe, his name would be brought before the Lord Lieutenant for appointment. No letter was received, however, from the second gentleman, and on the 21st January Mr. Tighe stated that that gentleman declined to write. Mr. Tighe, however, claimed exemption on the ground that he was the accepted Parliamentary candidate for one of the Divisions of Norfolk, and that he had no residence in County Kilkenny, but he was informed by the Lord Lieutenant that the reasons advanced by him would not justify his exemption from serving, and he was, accordingly, appointed. I am not aware of any gentleman having been exempted from serving on the ground that he is a candidate for election to Parliament. Neither of the other two gentlemen on the list has offered to serve, and at the present stage, when Assizes are in progress, it would not be practicable to appoint another gentleman to the office.

CUSTOMS OFFICERS AT LIVERPOOL.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is true that the Customs Authorities have in contemplation a material alteration in the hours of duty of Customs officers employed on landing and shipping duties in the port of Liverpool; whether this contemplated alteration involves any extension of hours of service; and, whether such alteration is an infringement of the terms under which the Officers entered the service?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): A Departmental Inquiry is in progress upon some questions relating to the hours of duty in the Outdoor Department of the Customs Service generally, but no alteration is contemplated which would involve any extension of hours of service.

NORWICH POST OFFICE.

MR. R. PRICE (Norfolk, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is substantially correct, as stated in *The Eastern Weekly Leader*, of the 16th February, that, in answer to a memorial protesting against the appointment to a clerkship in the Norwich Post Office of a comparatively junior man over the heads of several senior and competent men, the Secretary to the Post Office replied that in cases of this kind seniority and long service did not count; and, whether this reply accurately expresses the policy of the General Post Office in regard to such appointments?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: In reply to a question put by the hon. Member for Norwich on Thursday last, I stated that in all Post Office promotions, seniority and long service are invariably taken into account; and no statement to a different effect has, I am assured, been made in reply to a memorial from Norwich or any other town.

SWINE FEVER.

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has received from the Kilrush Town Commissioners a resolution asking that the Order of the Local Government Board in Ireland regarding swine fever should be withdrawn or modified; and whether he can comply with the request of the Kilrush Commissioners?

MR. G. RUSSELL: A resolution to the effect stated has been received. I am informed by the Veterinary Department that a larger number of outbreaks of swine fever have occurred in the Kilrush union than in any other union in Ireland. Four hundred and ninety-six outbreaks occurred in this union between 1st November, 1893, and the 23rd February, 1895. Local Authorities in Great Britain are empowered by the Board of Agriculture to prohibit the introduction of Irish pigs into their districts, and it is, therefore, the more incumbent on the authorities in Ireland to take measures to stamp out the disease there.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if the Local Government Board have received complaints of the operation of the swine fever regulations in Monaghan union; what number of swine have been slaughtered, and what number of cases reported there within the past six months; and what have been the fees of the veterinary surgeon, and the total cost to the rates in this union, since the Act was passed?

MR. G. RUSSELL: The Board of Guardians of the Monaghan union have passed a resolution requesting the withdrawal of the recent Swine Fever Order of the Privy Council. During the six months ended the 31st January last, 194 swine were slaughtered in the union. Seventy-nine cases of supposed swine fever were reported by owners to the police during that period, and in 66 of these the swine were slaughtered by the Veterinary Inspector of the Local Authority, as diseased. In 59 cases the outbreak of disease was confirmed on examination of the viscera in Dublin. The fees of the Veterinary Inspector of the union, since the Swine Fever Act was passed in November 1893, amount to about £142. The exact cost of the expenditure to the rates is not known. The funds voted by Parliament for the current financial year sufficed to meet the expenditure till nearly the close of 1894, and an assessment at the rate of ½d. in the £ was then made on the various poor law unions. The amount assessed on Monaghan union was £198 13s. 8d.

THE IRISH LAND ACT, 1870.

Mr. E. F. VESEY KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury—(1) whether purchasers under the Irish Land Act of 1870 are prohibited from devising their holdings by will to their children without the consent of the Board of Works; (2) whether the Board raises any objection to the succession of the son where the purchaser dies intestate; (3) whether in the case of Robert Grier, who made his will in 1880, devising his lands to his sons, and immediately applied for the consent of the Board, the Board have declared that there is a forfeiture because Grier died before the consent was obtained; and (4) whether, under the circumstances, he will order the forfeiture to be waived without the payment of a fine?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: The answer to the first paragraph of my hon. Friend's question is—yes, under Section 44 of the Act of 1870, unless a declaration has been issued at the request of the purchaser by the Board under Section 30 of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, removing the restrictions of the first-mentioned section except as regards subdivision and sub-letting. The answer to the second paragraph is—no, where the succession relates to the eldest son. As regards the case referred to in the third and fourth paragraphs, the Treasury have already authorised that the forfeitures may be waived. No fine was imposed, but the present occupants of the holdings were required to pay the legal expenses entailed by the procedure necessary to release the forfeitures.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

Mr. J. REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that there are six divisions in the Ballina union scheduled as congested districts, with a population of 12,500 people; and seeing that the distress in these divisions is as keen as in the Swinford and Belmullet unions in which relief works have already been commenced, will he explain why no relief works have been started in the Ballina union?

Mr. G. RUSSELL: In three of the divisions of the Ballina union, scheduled as congested, works will be opened on the 19th of this month. The names of these three divisions ara Attymass East and West, and Sraheen.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been drawn to the resolutions passed last Monday by the Tuam Town Commissioners, which state that there exists a necessity for opening public and remunerative work in the Tuam district to arrest the distress caused by the failure of the potato crop and to avert the horrors of a famine, and point out the want of employment, and urge the advisability of sending down an Inspector to whom the Town Commissioners can point out the most suitable works; and whether he will do something to relieve the distress, and will send an Inspector as requested by the Tuam Commissioners?

Mr. G. RUSSELL: My attention has been drawn to the resolutions in question. An Inspector of the Local Government Board has been sent to Tuam to inquire into the subject, and the result of his investigations will be brought under my notice in a day or two.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received copy of a resolution from the Strokestown Board of Guardians drawing attention to the distress in the union, and to the necessity likely to exist for employment amongst the labourer and small farmer class after the Spring work shall have been completed; whether various works have been suggested to him, including one to connect Strokestown with existing lines of railway; and whether he will favourably consider the suggestions made?

Mr. G. RUSSELL: I have seen a copy of the resolution referred to. The Local Government Board inform me they are not aware of the existence of any unusual distress in this Union at present, and they point out that when they recently offered to relax the restrictions on outdoor relief in the Union the Guardians refused to accept the offer.

OCEAN DERELICTS.

*Mr. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Dundee steamship *Loch Maree*, which was abandoned off the south-west coast of Ireland on the 10th instant, in latitude 52·30 N., longitude 12 W., was found by the steam-tug *William Jolliffe*, at 8 a.m. on the 25th instant, 185 miles north-west of Inishahill, and was safely towed into Belfast Lough, where she is now safely anchored, after travelling 250 miles as a derelict off the Irish coast; and will the Board of Trade make such arrangements with the Liverpool Tug Company as will secure its services to look after other derelicts?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): I received on the 1st instant a report that the tug *William Jolliffe*, employed by the owners of the *Loch Maree*, had found and brought into Belfast that vessel, as stated in the question of the hon. Member. The Board of Trade have no power to make such arrangements as is suggested. It is open to any person or Company to search for a derelict or wreck of any description, and to claim and obtain salvage from the owners of the property found and brought into port.

*MR. J. C. MACDONA: Is not the fact that the *Loch Maree* was so soon found by the tug-boat from Liverpool off the coast of Iceland proof positive that it is a compassable matter within the power of the Board of Trade to find derelicts that have been reported?

[No answer was given.]

DIPHTHERIA ANTI-TOXIN.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact that a specification for the preparation, by a German method, of remedial substances, and in particular diphtheria anti-toxin in a concentrated form, was accepted by the Patent Office on 26th January; whether such Patent will hamper the production of the serum in a concentrated form in this country for the use of public infectious and other hospitals and in the Military and Naval Hospitals; and whether it is the intention of the Government to permit such a Patent to be granted?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): The Comptroller-General of Patents informs me that a specification for a Patent, such as referred to in the question, has been lodged at his office, and that, in the absence of opposition, a Patent will be granted in the ordinary course. Whether the Patent, if granted, will be valid is a question upon which I, of course, pass no judgment. Whether such a Patent will hamper the production of serum in a concentrated form for hospital use is a point on which I cannot at present hazard an opinion; but I may remind my hon. Friend of a valuable Section in the Patents Act, 1883, which empowers the Board of Trade to order a Patentee to grant licences on reasonable terms.

TRAWLING.

MR. T. R. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to a meeting of the Aberdeen Fish Trade Association on 25th February, at which a magistrate of the city of Aberdeen, speaking on the subject of the Laws relating to trawling is reported to have stated that it was the duty of every law-abiding citizen to do what he could to resist the Law, and to have urged concerted action on the part of the members of the association to make an imposing demonstration against the Law; what steps he intends taking to prevent this threatened infraction of the Law; and whether the attention of the proper authorities will be drawn to the conduct of this magistrate?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I have seen the report of the speech at the meeting mentioned in the question, as also the report of a speech made by the magistrate referred to, at a meeting on Friday evening last. Though the former speech was not very cautiously worded, I do not gather that the magistrate intended to advise violent resistance to the Law, and to those who have to execute it. After inquiry made in the proper quarter I have no reason to suppose that such violent resistance is contemplated.

THE NORTH-EASTERN CIRCUIT.

MR. CYRIL DODD (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if Mr. Justice Wills is unfortunately prevented by illness from taking the business of the north-eastern Circuit, as announced; and, if so, what arrangement has been made in order that inconvenience may not arise from his absence for the conduct of the business at the York and the Leeds Assizes?

Mr. ASQUITH: I am informed that arrangements have been made by Mr. Justice Charles for his being joined by another Judge at Leeds; with regard to York, owing to the business being unusually light, he is able, on this occasion, to dispose of it himself without inconvenience to the public.

THE FINANCE BILL AND ENGLISH FARMERS.

Captain BETHELL (York, E. R., Holderness): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that English farmers are still assessed for Schedule B at one-half of the full annual value of their holdings; whether, as he promised during the discussions on the Finance Bill that English farmers should be placed on the same footing as Irish and Scotch farmers, he will take steps to completely carry out this promise this year; and whether he is aware that, even by the complicated process offered to English farmers for getting abatements off Schedule B, it is not possible in all cases to get the advantages which are obtained by Scotch or Irish farmers who are assessed on one-third of the full annual value of their holdings?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): The Amendment introduced in Committee on the Finance Bill last year, which equalised the rate of Schedule B in three countries, did not deal with certain subsidiary points. As the Law at present stands, England is in a better position than Scotland and Ireland in some respects, while in others, like that referred to in the question, Scotland and Ireland have the advantage. It will probably be necessary to make Legislative provision for removing these anomalies on either side.

Captain BETHELL: This year?

Sir W. HARCOURT: This subject is under consideration; it is rather a complicated matter.

HOURS OF SIGNALMEN.

Mr. CYRIL DODD: I beg to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade whether legal proceedings have been commenced against the Great Eastern Railway Company by the Board of Trade in respect of the complaint made February 1894, as to the hours of labour of signalmen at certain boxes on the London to Ipswich line of that Company, or what has been done to determine whether the Board of Trade were justified in declaring the revised Schedule of hours sent in by the Company, under the recent Act, on the 4th May 1894, as still unsatisfactory in regard to the hours at certain boxes, and to enforce a reduction of the hours to those considered by the Board of Trade reasonable; and, if conciliation has failed, and if proceedings have been commenced, when it is probable a decision can be obtained?

Mr. BRYCE: The Board of Trade has been anxious to bring about a settlement of this complaint without litigation, but their efforts have failed, and the Solicitor to the Board has been instructed to bring the case before the Railway Commissioners. Proceedings will be taken very shortly, but I cannot say when a decision may be expected.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS.

Sir JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the questions addressed to Ministers of the Crown having at two recent sittings of the House reached 82 and 91 in number, a large majority of them being of merely local interest, and having regard to the importance of economising the time of the House, he will favour an arrangement for printing and circulating the answers to questions of an exclusively local character, leaving those of Imperial interest, or dealing with urgent affairs, to be answered by Ministers at the Table as hitherto.

Sir W. HARCOURT: This is rather a delicate matter to deal with. I speak of it with great reserve, because I am aware of the jealousy with which Mem- of the House regard this privilege. I think it is one which the Government ought not to take an active part in interfering with; still I may, without offence, make a suggestion. There is no doubt that the multiplication of questions occupies a great deal of time. Very often the questions are of a local and personal character, and they are sometimes not of very general interest. If hon. Members would be satisfied, where they are of this purely local and personal character, to communicate with the Departments concerned, and to receive the answer, it would be easy to circulate that answer and to publish it in the locality, so that the people of the locality would be satisfied. It would not be necessary in this case to occupy the time of the House, which is not specially interested in these matters. In that respect, no doubt, an economy of time might be effected; but the Government could not undertake the censorship which the hon. Member suggests of distinguishing between what is important and what is not. They would rather leave this duty to hon. Members, and to their own discretion and responsibility. There is one other matter which has been raised, in reference to which I would make a suggestion to the House. When my hon. Friend speaks of 82 and 91 questions, he is much within the mark, because the practice of putting supplementary questions multiplies those numbers very considerably? I was told the other night that there were no fewer than 270 questions put, taking into account the supplementary questions. I think we might save a good deal of time if the practice of putting supplementary questions were somewhat restricted; but altogether I feel it is a matter for the judgment of the House itself, and not for the interference of the Government.

COMMERCIAL TREATY BETWEEN FRANCE AND CANADA.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, he can state whether the Treaty affecting the commercial relations between France and the Canadian Dominion has been confirmed by both these Governments; whether the Imperial Government has as yet given its assent; and, at what dates will the Treaty be completed and ratified?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Owing to a defect in the Act of the Canadian Parliament confirming the Treaty, it has not yet been possible to exchange ratifications. This will be amended as soon as the Canadian Legislature meets, and the ratifications will then take place without delay.

EVICTION NOTICES IN CAVAN.

Mr. VESEY KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether one of the tenants of Mr. George Stewart Smith, who owns seven townlands in the parish of Crosserlough, County Cavan, has received an eviction notice; whether he is aware that this tenant and others have repeatedly sought proof of their agent's authority to collect the rents, and information as to the whereabouts of the landlord, and have been refused any information except that Mr. Smith lives at Windsor, England, an address at which he cannot be found; and, whether, under the circumstances, police assistance will be given in the carrying out of the eviction?

Mr. G. RUSSELL: I am informed by the constabulary that no tenant on the property referred to has been served with an ejectment notice, but that two tenants have been decreed for rent. No individual tenant has taken steps to ascertain proof of the agent's authority to collect the rents, but some years ago the County Court Judge refused to grant decrees for rent until proof was given that the landlord was alive. The Judge of Assize, however, granted decrees on proof of rent being due. I understand that the tenants some time ago subscribed to enable the half-brother of their supposed landlord to discover the latter's whereabouts, but without result. If the sheriff enforces the decrees for rent, I presume police protection will have to be granted in the usual way.

ATTENDANCE IN IRISH SCHOOLS.

Mr. VESEY KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consider the advisability of introducing among the rules of the National Board of Education a rule similar to rule 101 in the new English code, giving to schools, where the average attendance has been greatly reduced by the prevalence of an epidemic, a special grant making up the loss in the ordinary grant?

Mr. G. RUSSELL: The Commissioners of National Education have reserved to themselves in their rules the power to deal leniently with schools whose attendances are reduced owing to epidemics, severe weather, or other causes of exceptional nature. The Commissioners do not see any ground, at present, for further modifying their rules to meet very exceptional cases.

NAVY AND ARMY ESTIMATES.

*Sir C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Navy Supplementary Estimates are likely to be moved; and when the Motion to first go into Committee on the Navy Votes for the coming financial year is likely to be made?

Mr. R. W. HANBURY (Preston): Can the right hon. Gentleman also give the House some information with regard to the Army Estimates?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I understand that the Estimates are all ready, and that they are in the hands of the printers. I had hoped that all the Estimates would be circulated on Wednesday, but I am told now that it will probably be Thursday.

*Sir C. DILKE: How soon will the Navy Supplementary Estimates be ready?

Sir W. HARCOURT: It is the intention of the Government to proceed at once with the Civil Service Supplementary Estimates, and then to go on with the Navy.

Mr. LEONARD COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): Are the Civil Service Estimates to be put down for tomorrow?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Yes.

TRADERS AND RAILWAY RATES.

Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the number of complaints against increased railway rates sent in by traders under the Act of last Session; and what arrangements are being made to facilitate the hearing of such complaints?

Mr. BRYCE: About 1,800 complaints have been filed; many of these, however, contain complaints from a large number of traders against more than one railway company, and in most of them a number of rates are involved. The principal permanent officers of the Department have been engaged in dealing with the cases, but the pressure of work is so great that I have appointed Mr. Pelham, who was recently employed in connection with the revision of canal tolls and charges, to assist the Department. The Board of Trade are using their best endeavours to consider these complaints as expeditiously as possible, in order that, in those cases in which no amicable settlement should have been arrived at, traders may be able to lodge their complaints as soon as possible with the Railway Commissioners.

THE GILGIT AGENCY.

Sir W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will state what is the total expenditure incurred by the Indian Government in connection with the Gilgit Agency each year since the date of its establishment, including the latest estimate of expenditure during the current year; and what has been the expenditure of the Kashmir State on the same account during the same period?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I cannot give the information asked for by my hon. Friend, but I will ask the Government of India to supply it.

LANDS VALUATION (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, looking to the public character of the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill, and to the great importance of the interests affected by the changes proposed by the Bill, a reasonable opportunity will be afforded to the different legal bodies in Scotland to report upon it, after the Government have put down their Amendments, and before the Bill is pressed forward in Committee?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour, Clackmannan and Kinross): Various important communications and suggestions are being received in regard to this Bill, and I have no doubt that my hon. Friend who is in charge of it will not press it forward until reasonable opportunity has been afforded to all persons interested of considering the

Bill and the Amendments which it will be proposed to make upon it.

POLLING PLACES IN COUNTY DONEGAL.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether any and what steps have been taken in compliance with the provisions of Section 18 of the Ballot Act, and Section 9 of the Act 27 & 28 Vic., c. 22, to carry out the Order in Council, confirming the establishment of new polling places in County Donegal, which was published about a month ago; and, whether he will take steps to secure that the law is obeyed?

MR. G. RUSSELL: The additional polling places were established by the chairman and justices at quarter sessions in October last, and their Order was confirmed by an Order in Council, dated the 17th January 1895. By Section 18, Sub-section 11, of the 35th and 36th Vict. c. 33, the register of voters in force at the time of making the Order in Council shall be the register of persons entitled to vote until the 1st day of January following; and by Sub-section 12, at any election held after the Order in Council, and before a new register of voters is formed, the poll shall be taken as if no such Order in Council had been made. Copies of the Order in Council were sent to the chairman of the county and to the clerk of the peace, who will prepare and issue special precepts for the new precepts before the next revision.

HONG KONG.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he has received a copy of the petition addressed by ratepayers of the Crown Colony of Hong Kong, praying for representative Government; and, what steps have been taken in the matter to grant the request of the petitioners?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: A copy of the petition was received some time ago, but the Secretary of State, after careful consideration, was unable to meet the views of the memorialists in regard to the proposals made for the grant of representative Government to Hong Kong.

MOTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR W. HARCOURT moved—

"That the Reports of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means may be entered upon at any hour, though opposed, and the proceedings shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the Sittings of the House, except of Standing Order No. 5."

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT moved—

"That the Committee on Public Accounts do consist of 15 Members: That Mr. Bartley, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Sir John Gorst, Mr. Hanbury, Sir Arthur Hayter, Sir John Hibbert, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Alpheus Morton, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Philip Stanhope, Sir Richard Temple, Mr. Webb, and Mr. Arthur Williams be Members of the Committee."

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS.

MR. THOMAS E. ELLIS (Merioneth) moved—

"That Sir George Osborne Morgan be discharged from the Select Committee on Leicester Writs:

That Mr. Samuel Evans be added to the Committee."

Motion agreed to.

MR. THOMAS E. ELLIS moved—

"That Mr. Charles Fenwick be discharged from the Select Committee on Shops Early Closing Bill:

That Mr. H. L. W. Lawson be added to the Committee."

Motion agreed to.

MR. THOMAS E. ELLIS moved—

"That Viscount Wolmer and Mr. Woodall be added to the Select Committee on Retired Soldiers and Sailors' Employment."

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

THE IRISH LAND BILL.

In asking leave to introduce a—

> "Bill to further amend the law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland; and for other purposes relating thereto,"

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) said: I have once more to invite this House to give its serious, weighty, and most deliberate attention to an Irish Land Bill. I do not conceal from myself that there may be in more than one quarter of the House a feeling of discouragement, perhaps not far removed from despair, in approaching once more the Irish Land Question. The details of that question are intricate; the circumstances are unfamiliar to Englishmen and Scotchmen, and are, in some particulars, almost incomprehensible. And yet the demand for legislation such as I am about to propose is almost universal in Ireland. I may say that it is universal, and not least in the province of Ulster. I hope that the House will not grudge the labour of again taking this heavy and, as it may seem, almost impracticable, burden once more patiently and firmly upon its shoulders. In some respects we approach the question to-night under circumstances of advantage. I have been told that if I were to produce a non-Party Bill it would receive favourable attention from those who are, in the larger question of Irish politics, opposed to me. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham and the Leader of the House are now the only two Members left in the House, except the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, who were in the Cabinet which passed the Land Act of 1881. Therefore the right hon. Gentleman, who leads an important section of this House, will, I am sure, feel that an effort to amend the Act to which he was himself not an unimportant party requires his very careful consideration. Apart from the right hon. Gentleman's personal connection with the Act of 1881, the section which he leads have always maintained, first, that the Land Question is at the bottom of the disturbed and restive feeling in Ireland; and, secondly, that—and it is one of their cardinal positions—that this House is competent to pass such legislation as Ireland requires better than a Home Rule Government could do it. The hon. Member for South Tyrone seems to me to have described what ought to be the Unionist view towards this proposal of mine in very pointed and unanswerable language. The hon. Member, in a recently-published article, says:—

> "I am a convinced Unionist. I have told the Ulster farmers that I am a Unionist first and a Land Reformer after that. But why am I devoted to the Union? It is because I believe that the Imperial Parliament is alike able and willing to do everything for Ireland better than an Irish Parliament can possibly do it. Take this belief away, convince me that on this vital issue the Imperial Parliament, as such, is unable or unwilling to do justice—I say that, if I am brought face to face with such a situation, the platform on which I firmly stood crumbles away."

That seems to me to be language worthy the attention of the whole Conservative Party in the House. I am not now going over the whole history of Irish agrarian reform. That would be a task which the House would not thank me for performing. I will mention one fact only. From 1816 to 1843 there were no fewer than 32 Acts of Parliament passed—what Burke called "a rabble of statutes"—concerning which a learned Irish Judge in a well-known passage declared that the whole code of landlord and tenant in Ireland, and all those 32 enactments in invasion of the common law, went directly to give increased facilities to the landlord, and that it never entered the head of the Legislature to make provision for the tenant. O'Connell did not go too far when he said that there had never been a more fertile source of murder and outrage than the iniquitous powers which the Legislature conferred on the landlord; and he declared—and truly, if my reading of Irish history is correct—that the cause of Irish crime was distinctly traceable to this. After the passing of the Act of Union it seems as if Parliament had deliberately set to work to make laws which have done more than anything else, perhaps, to make that Union the failure which, in my opinion, it has been. It is no wonder, if the House will bear in mind that fact, that Parliament has to be invited time after time, and that effort after effort has to be made in every direction, to unravel a web so tangled. All the tenacity and patience which was shown in passing those 32 Acts against the tenant ought to be rivalled and exceeded by us, on whom is the imperative duty cast of steadily and patiently repairing all this confusion and disorder. The first great step was taken in 1870. I am obliged to go back to that Act, because we shall have a great deal to say about it in discussing this Bill. By the Act of 1870 Parliament said to the landlord:—

> "You may turn out the tenant if you like; but if you turn him out, you shall pay him compensation, not only for his improvements, but for disturbance."

The Duke of Argyll is very fond of using strong language—I was going to say bad language—against the whole course of Irish Land Legislation.

*Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): Since 1870.

Mr. J. MORLEY: But the Duke of Argyll was a Member of the Cabinet—as was also the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square—which passed the Act of 1870. He was a party to that Act, and it is impossible not to see that the Act of 1870 contained a principle from which all that has been done since directly and obviously follows. What was that principle? It was this—that the tenant has a right, an interest of property in his holding independent of his improvements or of anything else, for which he was entitled to be compensated. I will not take the House into the metaphysics of dual ownership. It is not necessary. That the Irish tenant has, in the technical language of the English lawyers, an "estate" conferred upon him by the Act of 1870 I do not for a moment pretend; but I do say that, when you declare to the original legal owner of the land that he shall not put the tenant out of possession except on payment of a certain sum, on a scale fixed by the Act, it is idle to deny—and some of the greatest text lawyers in Ireland agree with this—that you give the tenant a share out of the ownership of the land, and you make the tenant an owner to the extent of the sum required to turn him out. You may call it partnership, ownership, or what you like, but do not deny that you once for all invested the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland with qualities and attributes absolutely foreign and strange to the relations which exist in this country and in Scotland. The distinguished and accomplished Statesman who now represents Her Majesty in Paris took an important part in all the discussions upon the Irish Land Act of 1870, and made a remark which I came across the other day, and which was not very encouraging, in connection with this subject. Lord Dufferin said of tenant-right that—

> "the whole subject is an incomprehensible puzzle to the intelligence of a British Parliament. The notion of a commercial value attaching to land, independent of, and in addition to, the landlord's rent and the farmer's profit, is to them an incomprehensible enigma."

Sir, that makes it more difficult than it might otherwise have been to persuade the House of some of the propositions that I have advanced. But, to conclude what I have to say on the Act of 1870, it was the opening of that great revolution in Irish land tenure which, though it was opened a quarter of a century ago, has not yet by any means, I am afraid, reached its term. Then came the Act of 1881, which gave the tenant in occupation of his holding three rights: first, the right to assign, devise, or sell his tenancy to anyone he pleased; secondly, the right to go into court and have the amount of fair rent fixed; and, thirdly, the right to secure the occupation of his holding for a fixed term with the right to renew that term from period to period. Those three rights hung together by a close logical chain, and that Act, founded as it was upon the principle laid down in 1870, is the charter, imperfect as it may be, of the Irish tenant's rights and privileges. It is impossible to mention that Act without commemorating the intrepid and far-seeing genius of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, who carried it—an Act which probably no one but himself, with so great a grasp of detail and so firm a hold of principle, could possibly at that date have induced Parliament to accept. I need not elaborately argue the case for the Act of 1881. I will only make this remark, that I do not believe that any one who has been responsible for the Government of Ireland since that date, or who has watched those who have had that responsibility, would not acknowledge that it would have been an almost impossible task but for the Act of 1881. It is as difficult to govern an over-rented country as it is to govern an over-taxed country. I would rather ask those who believe that purchase is to be the ultimate solution of the Irish Land Question whether they do not admit two things—firstly, that a system of universal compulsory purchase will take more than one generation to carry out, and that you must have some *modus vivendi* in the meantime; and, secondly, that purchase could not be carried out without arriving at a preliminary basis by an investigation of rent. If you consider how purchase up to the present moment has gone on, you will see how very slowly we are making an impression. In Ulster about 10 per cent., I believe, of the holdings have been sold, in Leinster only 4 per cent., in Connaught only 3 per cent., and in Munster 5 per cent., so slow is the impression which purchase is making, and so absolute is the necessity for what I have called a *modus vivendi*. In spite of all its vast cost and all the anomalies and inequalities that have attended the working of the Act of 1881, in spite of all that is abnormal in the whole system of fixing rents by a tribunal, I think every dispassionate observer will agree that it was an inevitable expedient. At all events, Sir, I need not labour it, because the landlords themselves, in their reply to the Report of the Select Committee, said:—

> "We do not ask that any rights or benefits which were conferred on large classes of the Irish tenantry by the Legislation of 1870 and 1881 should be taken away, or that any technical obstacles should be allowed to stand in the way of their being reasonably exercised or enjoyed."

It is quite true that as to further inclusions and concessions, they say:—

> "No such Legislation is called for. The Irish agricultural tenants are at present in a better position as regards the protection of their just rights and interests than similar tenants in other portions of the United Kingdom, and in any other country."

I do not assent to that, and I do not think this House will assent to it, when it considers some of the facts which it will be my duty to bring before it. If it is true that the Irish agricultural tenants are in a better position than any other tenants in any part of the world, that is not an argument against, but rather for bringing, as we propose to do, a still larger number of tenants into a similar favourable position. The only figure which I will inflict upon the House as to the working of the Act of 1881 is this:—The gross amount of rental dealt with under all the fair-rent provisions of that Act between 1881 and 1894 is £6,140,602. The reduction, by various methods and provisions of all these Acts, in round numbers was £1,280,000—that is to say, an average reduction of 20·8 per cent. I think some of the English gentlemen who addressed us on February 6, the second night of the Session, and who painted, I am afraid too truly, the almost desperate condition of agriculture in this country, and described how owners and farmers of land in England were in many cases on the verge of bankruptcy, will consider that the Irish landlords, who have had their rent reduced by 20·8 per cent., have not very much to complain of. I do not like to say that without admitting that I for one have seen enough of Ireland to say that I most sincerely commiserate, not the great landlords, but the small owners of land in Ireland—women and others—on their position. During the course of the last few months I have considered whether it was not possible to frame and adopt some device which would relieve small Irish landlords from the charges which now press upon them with great heaviness. I believe that all those who have considered this question in relation to the English charges have come to the same conclusion that I have—that at present I can see no means of bringing that relief to those whom I would willingly see relieved. The reduction of rent by the various fair-rent provisions of the Acts is roughly a million and a quarter. The expense of the Irish Land Commission in fixing fair rents from 1881 to 1894, is no less than £1,040,000; that is to say, an average of about £80,000 a year, though in 1883–4 it was nearly twice that sum. The official cost—not the cost to the parties—is something like £1,000,000. Now, Sir, what is the occasion which makes me come down to the House and ask leave to-night to introduce a Bill to amend the Act of 1881? In September or October next it will be open to tenants who had their rents fixed

14 years from that date to come into Court and again have a fair rent fixed, although that rent so revised and fixed afresh will not become payable until the expiry of 15 years—that is, in 1896. The question is whether, in the face of an approaching circumstance of that kind, we are to leave the Act of 1881 exactly as it stands; or whether we are justified in looking into its operation up to this point, and seeing how far it is necessary to put the ship into dock and repair it for a new voyage. The House appointed a Committee on the question last year, and I must for a moment diverge into a very unwelcome digression to say a few words upon that Committee, because upon the Report of that Committee, most, if not all, of the proposals which I am going to bring before the House were founded. So many things of an ill-natured character have been said of that Committee, that perhaps the House will forgive me for doing so. The House met on March 12, 1894; I put a notice on the Paper to the effect that I should move for the appointment of a Committee on the 16th. Night after night that notice appeared, but I was told that it was too wide. I amended it; it was resisted, first by one Gentleman opposite and then by another—not, I think, however, by any Irish Representative. [An hon. MEMBER: "Mr. Smith-Barry."] The hon. Member for South Hunts is not an Irish Member. The motion was agreed to on April 16th, and, one whole month having been lost the Committee was appointed on April 24. I will not go through the details of our work, but on July 24 the hon. Member for South Tyrone moved that the Committee was in a position to consider its Report. Dr. Johnson said, that if you speak well of an opponent you give him an advantage to which he is not entitled, but I cannot resist recognising in this place how much land reform in Ireland owes to the tenacity, ability, and energy with which the hon. Member for South Tyrone has spread the light upon the subject. Now the hon. Member having moved that resolution the majority of the Committee offered three more sittings to the minority, and we found, as the result of a division, a tie, six votes to six votes, and then I, as chairman, gave my casting vote in favour of bringing the proceedings to a close. I must say further, that the fortuitous absence of two of our colleagues prevented the majority being eight to six. But the position being thus, is it really contended that I, as chairman, was to sit there and allow in July those tactics to triumph which were resisted in March? I am not aware of any fact, I know of no rule, which should make me ashamed of the action I took. Now let me mention the objections made to the Report. We are told that all the evidence was one-sided. Now, what was that evidence? We had among the witnesses the Lord Justice of the Court of Appeal, we had the Chief of the Land Commission, we had another Chief Commissioner, Mr. Fitzgerald, three Legal Commissioners, a considerable number of Assistant Commissioners and Subcommissioners, and two County Court Judges. What sense is there in saying that these gentlemen, high officials, men of judicial mind and habit, intrusted with the administration of the Act, were one-sided persons, on whose evidence a Report should not be founded?

MR. E. H. CARSON (Dublin University): I have not said their evidence was one-sided.

MR. J. MORLEY: I do not speak of the hon. and learned Member, but it has been said that the evidence was all on one side.

MR. CARSON: We said there had been none but official evidence.

MR. J. MORLEY: It has been said again and again the evidence was one-sided.

MR. CARSON: Not by me.

MR. J. MORLEY: I do not say that, but again and again it has been asserted the evidence was one-sided, and I submit it was nothing of the kind. But the hon. and learned Gentleman says it was official evidence. True, it was; but what were we set to inquire into? Into the practice and administration of these Acts. And whom should we naturally consult but those who had been engaged in the administration? What was the alternative? We are asked now—

> "Why did you not give the landlords and their agents the opportunity of giving evidence?"

At the very first meeting of the Committee, I laid before the Committee my view that if we embarked upon a proceeding of that kind, inviting the body of landlords to come and give evidence, we should be equally bound to invite the body of tenants, and we should find ourselves launched and embarked, not on the proceeding the House of Commons directed us to take, but once more upon the laborious undertakings of the Devon and Richmond Commissions. One other thing is said—that this is a Report of a packed majority. What was the majority composed of? I should indeed have been a wizard in the art of packing if I could have packed such a majority. There was one follower of the hon. Member for Waterford, there were three or four of what I may call the more orthodox Nationalist Party, there were two or three English members, there was the hon. Member for South Tyrone, and certainly it was a strange course adopted if this was packing a majority against the hon. Gentlemen opposite. Then I will not go through the narrative of the later proceedings of the Committee. The hon. Member for Guildford came down when the time for considering our Report arrived and produced his draft Report. We had sat 30 days, we had heard all these gentlemen, and we were curious to know what view the party led by my hon. Friend took of all this evidence, and we find they had come to the Committee with one recommendation and one only—that the status of the judicial tenant on the expiry of the statutory term should be made perfectly clear and plain. That was the one result after the mountain had laboured so long. Certainly that was a most convenient proposal for the landlord interest. I daresay we shall hear more about this, and I shall be prepared to go further into the matter if required; and I shall be prepared to show that the Report of the Committee, whatever else you may say of it, represents the opinion of the most important sections in Ireland, and that the hon. Gentlemen opposite made a grave mistake, but a mistake which had compensation for the rest of the Committee who remained, when they left us to our deliberations. Now I proceed to describe our proposals. The foundation of the proposals the Government have to make is the broad principle of social policy in Ireland, and I will tell the House what it is. The general rule of protecting the tenant in the ownership of improvements is in any country a wise and sound rule, but three or four times wiser and sounder is it in Ireland. In Ireland it is absolutely indispensable. I will not re-open the old controversy whether landlords were in the habit of making improvements, and I myself have never been able to understand why Irish landlords should be irritated when it is stated that they have not been in that habit. There are good reasons why they did not. With 396,000 out of 490,000 holdings under £20, Irish landlords must have been millionaires to undertake it. This, at all events, is clear—that no more improvements, broadly speaking, will be made by the landlords. The hon. Member for South Hunts said last year, in debate:—

> "Before the Land Act of 1881, the landlords had been in the habit of supplying the materials and the tenants the labour for improvements in the farms, but, naturally, since that time, landlords had not been such fools as to do so."

We cannot expect them to be such fools, to borrow the hon. Member's phrase; therefore, whatever agricultural improvements take place in Ireland, henceforth they will be done by tenants. So, then, on that broad principle we are bound to do all we can to guarantee that the tenant, so far as is consistent with equity, shall have protection for the labour, energy, and money he has expended on his improvements. I need not go through the history of the clauses in the Act of 1881 dealing with this point. The House knows that after a long struggle between the Houses, the attempt of noble Lords to insert Amendments was resisted in this House, and the struggle was in vain. The intention of the Government was stated by my right hon. Friend (Mr. Gladstone) in one of his speeches, as follows:—

> "In the Act of 1870 we did, in respect to the tenant, recognise the principle that he might be compensated by a reasonable lapse of time in respect of improvements he had made, and that the use and profit of those improvements for a certain time might be considered as compensation, but we do not recognise that principle in the present Act. None of the enactments of the present Bill are founded on that principle. . . . It is much better, I think, that those who make improvements should have the whole benefit of the improvements."

From evidence before the Committee it is clear that, undoubtedly, the intention of Parliament was imperfectly guarded, so that the Courts in Ireland felt bound to decide in a sense having the effect of defeating the intention of Parliament. This fault we have to repair. And now I must detain the House for a minute or two with a case the name of which is a terror to all who sit on that Committee and all who study the question, the case of "Adams *v.* Dunseath." In no single word, I say, would I impugn the decision of the learned Judges in that case. The Duke of Argyll has said that to criticise this judgment is an interference with the independence of the Judges. I hope the House will not accept any such doctrine. I have sometimes thought that Judges, in criticising the conduct of the Executive, have gone beyond their sphere. What is a Judge? He is an officer appointed to interpret and apply the law. But is the law-maker not to examine his interpretations and applications of the law so as to ascertain whether the working of the law which he has made is in the direction which he intended, or in a different one? That was the course we took in Committee, and I am not aware that there is any fault to be found with it. The evidence of the Lord Justice in the Court of Appeal as to the difficulties in which the Courts found themselves when this Act of 1881 was placed before them is very pathetic. The sight of these learned men, in their ermine and furs, on the banks of the Liffey, struggling with adversity, was very moving. The Act of 1881, we were told by Lord Justice FitzGibbon, was one of a series of statutes all of which might have to be read together—as many as 14. Then these unfortunate men had to grapple with an artificial system of definition; they had to learn, he said, a special language, and it is a language foreign to lawyers. For example, "present" meant "present in time past," and "future" meant "present." They were perplexed and bewildered to find that "held," "occupy," "reside in," "live in," were interchangeable words, and meant the same thing. Such words, again, as "mainly," "reasonable," and "substantial" caused great difficulty and embarrassment. It is not matter for surprise, therefore, that the judgment in this great case has caused very considerable confusion in the minds of the Assistant Commissioners and others who have to administer the Act. There are two great cardinal points in this case. The first is the meaning of the word "improvements." When Parliament said that no rent was to be payable by the tenant in respect of improvements, what did it mean? Two views were taken. The first was that the whole effect of the improvement was to be placed to the credit of the tenant, and he was to be exempt from rent in respect of the increased letting value caused by the making of the improvement. The other view was that the actual improvements were measured by the money expended on them, and the actual improvement work only was to be taken into account and allowed for in fixing a fair rent. The Court held the latter view, with the result, broadly speaking, that since this decision there is only allowed to the tenant a certain percentage on work done—usually something like 5 per cent. We were told that this was the result, but we were also told that it was not the result intended by the Court. The Act of 1881 gave a general direction, no doubt, that in the fixing of a fair rent regard was to be had to the interest of the landlord and tenant respectively. Some of the Judges suggested that it might be possible and proper, and within the working of the Act, to apportion between landlord and tenant the increased letting value arising from the making of an improvement, and that this apportionment might be left to the discretion of the Court. I think that was said by Lord Justice FitzGibbon. In practice it is pretty certain that, generally speaking, the intention of the Court was not carried out. Mr. Justice Bewley told us that he thought it was carried out, but that it was done in a very singular form—namely, that allowance was made to the tenant over and above his percentage for the improvement in virtue of what the learned Judge called the tenant's occupation right. That is a very remarkable admission of the learned Judge, and one of which we could not find traces in practice in any evidence that came before us. In practice one of the results of the judicial construction has been that we have in this Bill to cure the misconstruction, apparently, which the

Commissioners have placed on the judgment in "Adams *v.* Dunseath." Lord FitzGibbon declared that they meant the tenant to have a percentage on his work, and the remainder to be divided at the discretion of the Judge between landlord and tenant. Mr. Justice Bewley said the tenant got his share of the increased value by the allowance for occupation right. Now the second cardinal element is the limitation of the improvements on which a tenant should not pay rent, to such improvements as would have entitled him to claim compensation on quitting his holding under the Act of 1870. If the improvements were of such a kind and were made under such conditions as would have prevented him from claiming compensation under the Act of 1870, it was held that the tenant was prevented from claiming exemption from rent in respect of such improvements—in other words, the right to claim exemption in respect of improvements was held to be exactly co-extensive and synonymous with the right to compensation for improvements under the Act of 1870. The effect of the importation of the Act of 1870 into the Act of 1881 was prodigious. The result was to sweep great classes and categories of improvements into the rent net, and, in spite of the plain and specific directions of the Act of 1881 that the tenant was not to pay rent on his own improvements, there are now large classes of improvements on which he is obliged to pay rent. I do not presume for a moment to say that they did not find a justification in the 57th section of the Act of 1881 for importing into its administration the Act of 1870, but that undoubtedly was not the intention of the Legislature when the Act of 1881 was passed. The situation of the tenant on quitting his holding under the Act of 1870 is wholly unlike the situation contemplated by the Act of 1881; he is continued in his holding, and the principles of compensation for improvements in the first case were never designed by Parliament to settle a fair rent to the continuing tenant. There is one more effect of this judgment, and then I will sum up. The 5th section of the Act of 1870 reversed the presumption of law that all improvements belonged to the landlord, but then the exceptions were so numerous that in practice the provision has been of little value, and the tenant has usually to prove his improvements. Now, I will sum up these three aspects of the question, which are not all, in my opinion, of equal degrees of importance. The first is, the disastrous importation of the restrictions and limitations of the Act of 1870 into the administration of the Act of 1881. The second is, the presumption that the improvements are made by the tenant in the absence of proof tothe contrary. The third is, the question of increased letting value. As to the presumption, we propose that all improvements on the holding shall be presumed to have been made by the tenant unless the contrary is proved. But if the court is satisfied that an improvement was made before the year 1850—20 years before the Act of 1870—then they shall ascertain, according to all the circumstances of the case and such evidence as they can get, whether legally admissible evidence or not, who it was who made the improvements. So much for presumption. How do we deal with the importation of the 4th Section of the Act of 1870? We propose that neither a contract by a tenant not to claim compensation for any improvement made by him on quitting his holding, nor anything else in the 4th Section of the Act of 1870, shall authorise the allowance of any rent in respect of any improvement. We leave the 4th Section of the Act of 1870 to perform the functions for which it was passed; but, otherwise, outside of these functions, we turn this Section out of the Fair Rent Courts, so far as it has had the effect of restricting and limiting the right of the tenant to exemption from rent on the fruits of his own industry and energy, and so of frustrating the undoubted intention of the Legislature. Now I come to the third point, as to the increased letting value. Mr. Justice Bewley told us that this was an academic question. He said that after you had fully indemnified the tenant for his own improvements, and given him a full and adequate percentage there is really very little left to decide between him and the landlord. This is in substance, in my judgment, by no means the most important of these three aspects of the question of improvements. But, unfortunately, the history of mankind shows that it does not at all follow that the most ardent controversy will not flame and blaze around most unimportant points. In theology, in philosophy, in currency, and even in grammar, it has constantly been the very smallest points that have thrown mankind into the greatest passions. What we propose to do by the Improvement Clause is, firstly, to impose a duty on the Court of ascertaining whether any improvements as claimed have been made, and to record such improvements; secondly, that record shall be *prima facie* evidence on the future fixing of the fair rent; thirdly, we define what is an improvement within the meaning of the Act; fourthly, we assure adequate and ample indemnification of the tenant for his outlay, his labour, and his energy, and we assure him further so much of the increased letting value as is produced by and attributable to his improvements. The court, of course, is directed by the Act to have regard to the interest of the landlord and tenant respectively. Fifthly, we direct the court to be mindful of the right of the tenant to the continued occupation of the holding—a right asserted and described by Mr. Justice Bewley. Sixthly, I have spoken of the full indemnification of the tenant. Of course we provide in these clauses that the compensation so described must be definite and tangible—either money or money's worth. Now, I will go much more rapidly over the other provisions. By the Act of 1881 a fair rent once fixed is fixed for 15 years. I call the attention of the House to this remarkable fact:—The Act of 1881 had not been six years in force before it was found that the period was too long, and the right hon. Member for Manchester—whose absence I regret on public as well as personal grounds, and whose presence we hope for very speedily—the right hon. Gentleman, despite his severe and violent protestations that he would never consent to the abridgement of the statutory term—a part of that vehement kicking against the pricks so common a feature in the dealings of English Statesmen with Irish questions—was forced to recognise that the statutory term had broken down, and by the Act of 1887 judicial rents were subjected to a process of revision year by year for three years. In connection with the statutory term three points arise and are dealt with in the Bill. What is my position as a tenant when the statutory term expires? Does the old non-judicial rent awake into life, or does the judicial rent fixed 15 years before run on? I am happy to think that on this point there is no difference among us. We are all agreed that this moot point should be settled, and we propose to make it clear in the Bill that at the end of the statutory term the rent payable should be the judicial rent previously fixed, and that the holding should continue to be subject to the statutory conditions thereby revised. The second part is as to the length of the statutory term. There was a complete consensus of evidence that this term was too long, and I would remind hon. Gentlemen who do not know Irish questions that the Cowper Commission, which sat on the nomination of the right hon. Member for West Bristol, recommended the abridgment of the statutory term. Some witnesses wanted five years, but we have determined that 10 years is a fair term to allow. The third question is a more difficult question. Are you to apply this abridgment of the statutory term to terms now current? Are you to allow tenants who have already had fair rents fixed for 15 years, to come into Court at the end of 10 years? It is hard to contend that there is any inviolable sanctity about the period of a statutory term after the precedent set. It is a question of equity and of policy. I hope it will be remembered that revision is not necessarily the same thing as reduction; it did not prove to be under the Act of 1887. At any rate our position is this—If 15 years are, in the opinion of Parliament, as they are in the opinion of the Government, too long for equity and for social convenience, and if every future fair rent is to be for 10 years and no longer, I do not know how you can justify the shutting out of so many tenants who had their rents fixed, say, between 1886 and the present day—shutting them up in a sort of limbo of their own on a 15-years term—a term which, by hypothesis, Parliament has decided to be inexpedient. Therefore, we propose to the House that this abridgment of the statutory term shall apply to terms now current. I now pass on to what is known as the landlord's right of pre-emption. In the Act of 1891 the tenant was allowed free sale of his interest. But before he sold it he was to give notice to the landlord that he wished to sell his tenancy. On receiving that notice the landlord might under the Act purchase the tenancy for such a sum as might be agreed upon, or if the landlord and tenant did not agree then the holding was to be sold for what the Court might ascertain to be what the Act has called the true value. I ought to say that the specified value means this:—When the Court fixes a fair rent, if the landlord so desires it he may call upon the Court at the same time to specify what the value of that holding will be in case the tenant should at some future time wish to sell and he should wish to buy. That is specified value. True value is the value ascertained by the Court. Under the Ulster custom the tenant has no specified value, and he may please himself whether he will sell under the custom or under the Act. If he sells under the Act the landlord has the right of pre-emption; but practically we understand that he sells in pursuance of the custom and avoids pre-emption. The Commissioners nearly all told us that this fixing of specific and true value, so far as they are called upon to do it at all, is one of the most difficult functions they have to perform. That cannot but have the effect in Ulster of giving the tenant right to put aside his pre-emption to the landlord, and sell his tenancy for the best sum he can get in the highest market. The practice or precedent in Ulster cannot and ought not to be lost sight of. We regard the right of pre-emption on the part of the landlord as a check on improvements; and, therefore, in accordance with the principle I have laid down, we propose to repeal so much of the Act of 1881 as gives the landlord the right of pre-emption where the tenant sells his holding. I am glad to think that in practice this right of pre-emption is not greatly valued or greatly resorted to. I pass now to a proposal, mentioned in the report, and which I regard as of great importance. A present tenant is a man whose tenancy subsisted at the time of the passing of the Act of 1881, or was created before January 1883. A future tenant is a man whose tenancy began after the passing cf that Act, and a man who has a tenancy of this kind cannot come into Court. The reason of that was—in the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian—that Parliament did not desire to make a holocaust of free contract. I hope myself that political economy will some day return from her hard exile; but we have to deal with that part of the work called Ireland as it is, and cannot regard the system of free contract as very likely to take place in Ireland at any time we can now contemplate. Unhappily, the number of future tenants is every year recruited by many hundreds of new comers, and these new comers are undoubtedly laying up trouble for future government in Ireland. Under the Act of 1887 a present tenancy is finally broken by the delivery of a registered letter informing the tenant that the tenancy has been determined by a judgment or a decree for ejectment for the non-payment of rent. He thereupon became a caretaker. His status is reduced, and if he allows the period of redemption—that is to say, six months—to expire without redeeming his rights, his present tenancy is absolutely at an end. If he subsequently comes to terms with his landlord and discharges his obligations a new tenancy is created, and is, of course, a future tenancy. This kind of thing is going on all over Ireland, and I think this facilitation of the conversion of present tenancies into future tenancies was not contemplated by many of those hon. Members who assented to the clause of the Act of 1887. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member for South Tyrone assents to that. The object of that clause was a good one, as it aimed at preventing all the turmoil of an actual putting out, but it had unforeseen consequences in this easier transformation of the character of the tenancy. What we propose is this—and I hope it will not be rashly dismissed—it is this: where present tenancy, to use not a legal word, had degenerated into a future tenancy which has been in existence: for a period of five years, and the tenant has discharged all the obligations incident to such a tenancy, the holder of it at the end of the five years shall be deemed to be a present tenant once more and again in the possession of all the rights of one. I do not know whether the House realises what the effect of that change will be, but I think it will be an inducement to the tenant to do his best to discharge his obligations during the period of five years in order to recover his lost ground. In fact, it will be a premium on reasonable conduct on the part of the tenant.

Mr. J. T. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): May it begin at any time?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Certainly, wherever a future tenancy has lasted for five years the future tenant can go into Court and apply to have a fair rent fixed—that is, the tenancy must have begun five years before the application. The proposal has been very carefully considered by the Government, and is submitted with some confidence to both sides of the House. I come next to the exclusions under the Act of 1881. Those exclusions have shut out large bodies of tenants, and I hope Parliament will now see the expediency of admitting them to the fair-rent Courts. The first and most difficult of these questions is that of town parks. A town park in Ireland means a piece of land close to a town bearing increased value as accommodation land occupied by a person living in the town. The Act of 1881 did not allow fair rents to be fixed on holdings of that kind. Enormous conflicts of decision have taken place in the Irish Courts as to what constitutes a town. It was held under the Act of 1870 that Portglenone, with a population of 800, and Newmarket, with a population of 765, were not large enough to be towns, and these could not have town parks. Following these decisions the Land Commission, in the earlier administration of the Act of 1881, held that Borrisokane and Kircubbin, with populations of 700 and 600 respectively, were too small to have town parks, but later on Hacketstown, a place of over 600 inhabitants, Newport, with a population of 683, Fivemiletown, with 500 inhabitants, and Timoleague, with 360, were held to have town parks, and in the present year Caledon, with a population of 700, has been held to be a town. They were held to be a zone from which the tenants could not come in to have fair rents fixed. The Cowper Commission recommended that no town should have town parks unless it had a population of over 5,000, and the Government of 1887 proposed in their Bill 2,000 as the limit of population, but another place for once did not allow a Conservative Government in this House to have its own way, and struck the 2,000 limitation, leaving the law as it was. What we propose is that there shall be no town park zone where the population is less than 2,000, and we propose as a second test, which I am not at all sure should not be made the only one, the question whether land adjoining a town is or is not used to make a profit by farming. I am not at all sure whether it will not be found, as the discussion proceeds, that it will be best to take that simple test only. The next exclusion is demesne land. The Judges say sometimes it is easy to settle a demesne case, but at other times it is very hard. The first decision was that land which was used for the purposes of pasture or pleasure, or during the minority of the owner, was demesne land; and I think the House will feel it to be hardly fair if land of that kind, attached for temporary convenience, is taken into Court to have a fair rent fixed, perhaps when the owner is elsewhere. The owner may be absent elsewhere, and it might suit him to let part of his demesne to a tenant; but it would be hard if the tenant had the right to have a fair rent fixed against him in his absence—perhaps in India on duty. I pass to pasture holdings. Pasture holdings were excluded from the Act of 1881 unless the tenant resided on the holding, or unless the annual value was over £50. In those cases no fair rent could be fixed. Mr. Justice Bewley thought the figure should be raised from £50 to £100. The Government accepted the recommendation of the Committee and provided that unless a pasture holding was over £200 the tenant shall have the right to go into Court. We think the big graziers are able to take care of themselves and take their own part. We then provide, with the exception of the big graziers, with whom we have no particular concern, that the tenant must actually reside on the holding. Next, as to subletting. No tenant now can apply to have a fair rent fixed if he is not in *bona fide* occupation, and he is not in *bona fide* occupation if he has sublet a portion of his holding unless he has secured the landlord's consent. There has been some doubt as to what is "consent" in the judicial mind. Our proposal is that the tenant should not be debarred from having a fair rent fixed by reason of his having sublet, provided he retains in his possession a substantial part of the holding. I shall only make one remark on this. It is said you will have all the old vices of the old Irish system of breaking up farms and of subdivision, but we contend that the very reverse of this will be the effect of this clause. The moment the tenant comes into Court to have a fair rent fixed the tenant is thereby disqualified from subletting, because to sublet will be a breach of the statutory conditions. I shall pass by three or four more points which are of minor importance here. We have had to consider the case of the middleman, where the sub-tenant has been deprived of his right to have a fair rent fixed without any reference to the landlord. We propose to guard against this harsh power being used where the landlord is aware of the subletting and has not dissented from it.

Mr. CARSON: The landlord being the middleman?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The immediate landlord. It not unfrequently happens that the middleman is evicted for non-payment of rent, and the sub-tenants lose their holdings. Our object is to turn them into tenants in occupation—that is, tenants under the head landlord. We, in fact, blot out the middleman. Next as to the case of the limited owner. It is well known that great hardship has arisen from complications of the law in this respect. Similar difficulties arise in other directions, and we take care to guard against fraud or collusion. Now these are some of the matters which we propose to set right. There are, however, two or three other topics which perhaps the House will kindly allow me to go into. First, there is a proposal to which I attach very great importance. The Cowper Commission recommended that no arrears of rent should be recoverable if more than two years were due. We propose to prevent the recovery of rents where more than two years are due; but we propose that within the next two years, which I may call a period of grace, all arrears now due may be recovered, but after two years have expired the landlord cannot recover more than two years. I have consulted many persons in Ireland on this point, and I find that there are very contradictory views held. One view was that it will make things harder for the tenant, because the landlord would have greater inducement than now to insist upon his right before the end of two years. I will give to the House the view of a County Court Judge on the other side. [An hon. Member: "Roscommon"?] The case occurred in the west of Ireland. The Judge said:—

> "It was intolerable for landlords to allow these arrears to hang over the tenants. He would tolerate no landlord when they allowed six or seven years' rent to hang like a stone of lead round unfortunate tenants' necks, and he would make use of the law to stop it. He would give no decree."

And he went on to say:—

> "He would not hear of those arrears being allowed by landlords to hang over tenants and then have them slap decrees. In equity the thing should be put down. He had seen arrears kept over tenants since the famine. He had put his foot down on this thing in another county."

Then the remark was made that since the Arrears Act it was very hard on the landlord, but the Judge replied:—

> "It is not hard on the landlords; it is ten thousand times harder on the tenants. The tenants should be made pay a fair rent, and no more about it. I differ from Mr. Morley almost in every particular thing in politics, but I agree with him in this—that two years' rent is the most a landlord should ever get."

I think the House will recognise that these are things which require a good deal of consideration. They have been forced on me by some years of observation, and my own view is that some limitation as to the recovery of arrears would be in the highest degree desirable in the interest of both landlord and tenant. I have now two more proposals to make. I have been asked whether I was going to propose any reform in procedure. Now, there is one particular reform in procedure which was pressed on my attention in Ireland, and to which I have given the fullest, most careful, and prolonged consideration. The proposal to which I refer is one of the highest importance. The proposal submitted to me was this:—

> "When you are revising the rents fixed, cannot you think of some automatic scheme avoiding the expense of taking cases into Court to be re-heard?"

The question of a produce rent is not one familiar in this country, and, after careful consideration, I cannot say that any scheme of the kind would meet the difficulty in Ireland or carry out the object which those who desire it have in view. I shall tell the House the proposal which we have not put in the Bill, but which I throw out as the best proposal submitted by those who have considered the question. That is the proposal, and though it is not in the Bill hon. Gentlemen can have access to it in its precise and legal form, and I should be glad if hon. Members from Ireland will consider it. The plan is this. We are now coming to the period for revising judical rents. Suppose that we had this semi-automatic plan and let us see how the Land Commission are to set to work in order to fix a rent on a holding. First, the Land Commissioners are to take the union or county or whatever other area they may think fit. They are then to classify the holdings in the district according to their character and according to the year in which the previous judicial rent was fixed. They then go to work in the ordinary way, and they fix a fair rent on the prescribed number of holdings of any class of a particular year within that district. Then they ascertain the average proportion or ratio between these new rents and the previous judicial rents in each of these classes of holdings, and they then proceed to apply that proportion or ratio so discovered and arrived at in all holdings of the same class in the same year and in the same district.

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) was understood to ask whether the ratio was to be between the whole of the rents and all the holdings classified.

Mr. J. MORLEY: It would have to be done in the way indicated by my hon. Friend, and there my hon. Friend probably discerns a rather fatal objection to the plan. It will have to be done by averages. The valuer will take a certain number of holdings of one class, and he will average the ratio between the judicial rents so fixed and the old judicial rent. If the House finds our plan to be an impossible one, *a fortiori* they will find any other plan that can be invented or devised presenting still more formidable difficulties in the way. But it is a most important subject, that of providing an automatic scale which would save the trouble of revising rents in courts in Ireland, and would be one of the greatest benefits to that country. I come now to what is known as the evicted tenants.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): What about the mill holdings?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Certainly, that is one of the exclusions which we propose to remove—that is to say, provided the holding is covered by the clause which enacts that, provided a substantial part of the holding is agricultural or pastoral, it shall not be deprived of that character. But I now deal with what is called the evicted tenants. Last year it was my duty, as the Minister responsible for administration in Ireland, to make certain proposals to the House as to certain evicted tenants in that country. I told the House, on my official responsibility, that I regarded those proposals as demanded by considerations of administrative urgency, and that nothing short of them, or some such proposals, would meet the necessities of the case or close the door to imminent peril to social order. I told the House that the mere re-enactment of Section 13 of the Act of 1891 would be entirely inadequate. To-night I am here to propose, with some not unimportant modifications, the re-enactment of Section 13. The late Government thought that social peace in Ireland justified them in interpolating an Evicted Tenant Clause into the Purchase Bill; I do not think, therefore, that I am more inconsistent in interpolating such a clause into this Bill. I shall be asked—and I shall answer them frankly—two questions. I shall be asked how I explain the fact that the rejection of the Bill of last year has not been followed by any interruption to that blessed and merciful calm in which Ireland has for now nearly three years been wrapped about. I shall also be asked why we make a proposal to-night which a few months ago I described as inadequate. I shall give a perfectly frank answer to both questions. One reason why administrative trouble has been avoided, in my opinion, was that the gentlemen from Ireland were unexpectedly able to succour the hard necessities of that ragged cloud which my right hon. Friend, the Member for Bodmin referred to. The danger which Parliament ought to have met, and could have met, with permanent effect was for the moment tided over; the mischief was for this year, and may be another year, assuaged. But the "peril to social order" in the Queen's Speech still remains, still haunts Ireland, and would still perplex the Governor of Ireland, whoever he may be, and whichever Party may be in power, until that difficult question is solved. We were also asked:—

> "Why do you make a proposal to-night which last year you described as being inadequate?"

Let us look at the question practically. We were told last year that the Opposition, and that Legislative Chamber which controls, or is controlled by, the Opposition here, would accept no proposal for dealing with those unfortunate men except on two conditions—firstly, that these proposals should be voluntary, and, secondly, that they should proceed by way of purchase and not by way of reinstatement as tenants. All that reached me during the Recess convinced me that the Irish landlords, who have steered the House of Lords in Irish matters, are still, I am sorry to say, so far as the proposals of last year are concerned, in a hardened and impenitent frame of mind. What does this mean, therefore? It means that if we are to make any proposal at all, we must make the proposal voluntary, and we must proceed by way of purchase. We were assured by hon. Gentlemen from Ireland, the hon. Member for South Hunts, and others, that the renewal of Section 13 would suffice for dealing with the only cases which needed to be dealt with, and with the only cases that it was the duty of Parliament to consider. The landlords who assured us of this have undoubtedly very considerable power of fulfilling their own prophecies and of making their own word good. At any rate, we propose to give them the chance and to take them at their word. I will not profess to believe that this will suffice, but, at all events, it is leaving no stone unturned, so that whatever happens, we shall, at least, have no responsibility. We take the responsibility which you yourselves declare to be adequate, and if your prophecies are falsified, on your head the result will lie. I will describe the modification which we propose in Section 13 of the Act of 1891. According to Section 13, the landlord and tenant are to agree for the sale of the holding to the former tenant, and then they could go to the Land Commission and get an advance as if the evicted tenant was in possession of the holding. Now, there are great difficulties, as I have been informed, in getting the landlord and tenant together. Their relations are unfortunately so strained that there is difficulty in getting them together; so we provide this, that either party—and it will usually be the tenant I take it—has to serve a notice on the landlord and on the Land Commission of the fact that he is willing to enter into an agreement for the purchase of his holding. By this means the House will see that either of the parties can move the Land Commission and can put the proposal in operation. If the other party does not object in prescribed time and manner, the agreement shall be deemed by the Land Commission to have been entered into. If they do not agree as to price, then the Land Commission shall fix the price, and if the seller objects either to enter into the presumed agreement at all or to take the price, the whole affair falls to the ground. It is a voluntary arrangement, and while I do not profess to believe that it means a final settlement of the question of the evicted tenants, I think it can do no harm; and if by the good will of the parties concerned it is widely operative, its effect cannot be bad, but rather good. I apologise to the House for detaining them so long. But the ground to be covered is large, and the subject is laborious. All I can say is that we have made a strenuous effort to meet the practical difficulties of one of the foremost questions in the whole field of contemporary British politics in a practical, firm, and reasonable spirit. In that spirit I earnestly, and not without confidence, appeal to all sober, responsible men in both of the camps into which Ireland is divided on this question to give a fair and careful consideration to these proposals, and not lightly or passionately at this day and hour of Irish peace to fling away an opportunity of placing upon the Statute-book a just and politic scheme—an opportunity which may, perhaps, not very speedily return.

Mr. EDWARD CARSON (Dublin University) said, that he did not think that anyone in the House would maintain that the right hon. Gentleman had not attempted to give the House at the earliest moment a very full outline of his proposals in connection with Irish land. It would be impossible, and also unwise, to attempt to follow the right hon. Gentleman very minutely into the proposals he had made, or to express at this stage a very definite opinion upon them. If there was one thing more than another apparent from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman it was that the House this Session would be called upon to deal with alterations of the law of landlord and tenant in Ireland, involving the greatest complexity and the minutest detail; and in view of the amount of business which had already been put before the House in priority to the Irish Land Bill, he contemplated with some terror the time which would be necessary for the discussion of so complicated a measure. The right hon. Gentleman said that from 1816 to 1843 a vast number of Irish Land Bills had been passed. He noticed that whenever gentlemen opposite dealt with the question of Irish land, they began with the grievances which the Irish tenant suffered prior to 1870, and the only difference in their speeches in the House and in the country in this respect was that in the House they admitted that an improvement had taken place since 1870, while in the country they spoke as though the Acts of 1870, 1881, and 1891 had never been passed. The right hon. gentleman dealt with the legislation up to 1843. Might he inform the right hon. gentleman of what ought to be a cardinal fact in this matter—that not one shred or tittle of that legislation was now remaining on the Statute-book? Every one of those Acts was practically repealed by the Act of 1860, and the whole law of landlord and tenant in Ireland depended, not on anything passed prior to 1860, but on the three Acts of 1860, 1870, and 1881. The right hon. gentleman also made a statement which appeared in the report of the Committee, that, while the reductions in rent given by the Irish Land Commissioners only amounted to 20 per cent., the reductions in England had been vastly greater. That passage in the report was not founded upon any evidence. Not a single question was asked about it during the whole inquiry, and nothing could be more unfair than to say that because certain reductions had been made in England there ought to have been similar or greater reductions made in Ireland. Where in England was it found day after day that the tenants' interests were being sold for £20, £30, and even £40 an acre? Yet that was the case in Ireland. Whatever the legislation had been, the result of it was that the accumulated interest which the tenant had received had now reached such vast proportions that it was about double the freehold of the landlord. In respect to reductions, therefore, the fact must not be left out of account that, while English landlords could not let the land, not an acre in Ireland could be obtained without paying £20 an acre or more for the tenant's interest. The right hon. gentleman had criticised rather severely the conduct of the minority upon the Committee. That Committee and the appointment of it was not altogether of that extremely fair character which the right hon. Gentleman would have the House to believe. While the notice for the appointment of the Committee was actually on the paper of the House, a Bill, which practically embodied the recommendations of the Committee as ultimately made, was brought before the House. What happened? The points embodied in the Bill were every one affirmed by the members who represented the majority on the Committee. They publicly declared in the House that there were certain principles and details which they were prepared to adopt; and then they went to the committee-room to find evidence to justify them. This kind of procedure was rather common in relation to Irish landlords; it was to condemn them first and try them afterwards. [Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: "What did the minority do on that occasion?"] The minority moved an amendment that, pending the report of the Committee, the Bill ought not to be proceeded with. The complaint of the minority in regard to the evidence before the Committee was not that it was one-sided, but that only official witnesses were called, and that the recommendations of none but official witnesses were absolutely useless. The Committee was to examine and report as to whether they could suggest to the House any better mode of procedure than that adopted by the Land Commission. And whom did the Committee ask for information on this point? The very gentlemen who had themselves inaugurated this procedure. The Committee said to these paid officials—

> "You have been paid to inaugurate the best possible procedure. Have you done so?"

Did the right hon. Gentleman expect them to say No? The minority suggested that some non-official witnesses should be called; and on the first day the right hon. Gentleman himself, in laying down his "ground plan," suggested that one or two practitioners in the Court who would not be bound by official procedure, and one or two valuers on either side, should be called. But it was that very evidence which the right hon. Gentlemen and the majority on the Committee refused to call. The right hon. Gentleman in his speech on the second reading of the Bill of last Session gave as a reason for the appointment of the Committee that it was expedient to consider whether some scheme could not be hit upon for administering the Land Acts less costly and leading to less litigation than the present. The evidence before the Committee was of a most alarming character on this point. In every case where a fair rent was fixed it cost the landlord £6 or £8 and the tenant £5 or more. Yet not a single witness, except the official witnesses, was called to say whether he could suggest any means of stopping these terrible expenses. The Committee suspended its labours without making a single suggestion on what the right hon. Gentleman had himself pointed out to be one of the most vital points. The right hon. Gentleman was credited with having drafted the Report of the Committee, and at the end of that draft there was a recommendation that the Committee should be appointed for the further consideration of certain subjects. In other words, when the right hon. Gentleman drafted his Report he was of opinion that those matters and the cognate questions on which he was about to legislate should be further considered. What better justification of the action of the minority could there be? If Select Committees were to do any work at all, it was a strong line to take to closure six members of a Committee who wanted to hear further evidence because six others thought they had heard evidence enough. Perhaps the most material part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech was the statement as to what would take place on the Bill. He was sure that it was the duty of the Opposition to weigh the provisions of the Bill, not in reference to anything which the Committee had reported, but in reference to the merits of the proposals themselves. In doing so they would be carrying out the wishes even of the landlords of Ireland; for the statement of the Landlords' Committee referred to the right hon. Gentleman was perfectly genuine, as far as Amendment of the Act of 1881 was concerned; and the landlords would not desire any difficulty to be thrown in the way of facilitating the working of the Act. There were many subjects referred to by the right hon. Gentleman which were matters of detail where improvement was required. Such was the subject of town parks. But until the provisions of the Bill were seen it was impossible to pledge support to them. There were undoubtedly points where Amendments to the Act of 1881 might legitimately be made, but other of the right hon. Gentleman's proposals seemed, so far from being Amendments to the Act, to be enormous advances upon it, which would lead to the subversion of many of the fundamental principles on which that Act was founded. These points might appear innocent when stated in the sauve and bland manner which the right hon. Gentleman always assumed when he was proposing something revolutionary; but they were very much opposed to the main principles of the Act of 1881. The right hon. Gentleman, for instance, proposed to abolish the fixing of specified value, and to take away the landlord's right of pre-emption. Had the right hon. Gentleman considered how far-reaching was that proposal in regard to the whole superstructure of of the Act of 1881? The whole reason for the intervention of the court under that Act was, as stated over and over again by the right hon. Member for Midlothian, that because of the land hunger in Ireland, the tenant could not be trusted to give what was the reasonable and fair rent to the landlord. But by abolishing the specified value and the right of pre-emption, the tenant was practically put into the same position in reference to the land hunger. The competitive rent was utterly set aside in fixing the fair rent; but now the tenant could go into the open market and take advantage of the very land hunger and competition against which he had been protected to sell his interest to another tenant. That one proposition would be practically a re-enactment of the whole mischief and injury which had been first occasioned by the land hunger. The really vital question in the Bill was the law dealing with improvements and the presumption in relation to those improvements. While the landlords would be ready to consider any change of the law which would obviate any injustice, he understood the provisions of the Bill to be of a much more far-reaching character than anything which had ever before been suggested to the House by a responsible Minister. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to alter the definition of improvement; but he did not say what the definition was to be. To alter that definition would be to make such an alteration in the whole code and in all the decisions of the courts as must lead at least to great controversy. The right hon. Gentleman went on to discuss the case of Adams *v.* Dunseath and its effect upon improvements. That interest had to be measured between landlord and tenant, according to the nature of the work. That was the law at present; and if the right hon Gentleman disputed that, he would find it so laid down in the evidence of Lord Justice Fitzgibbon; and, further, he might be referred to the statement of his own Lord Chancellor, Lord Herschell, who said:—

> "If a tenant's improvements were of a character that made the land worth £20 a year more, that was not all to be regarded as the property of the tenant, because not all would be produced by his money, industry, or skill: therefore, the judgment in Adams *v.* Dunseath on the point was perfectly correct."

If he rightly understood the right hon. Gentleman, the whole increase of the letting value brought about by the tenant's labour was to be given to the tenant?

MR. J. MORLEY: No, no; so far as it is produced by the work of the tenant.

MR. CARSON said, as he understood, the increased letting value of the holding would go to the tenant.

MR. J. MORLEY: I did not say that, and I do not understand that the Bill does that.

MR. CARSON said, of course he could not criticise the Bill, but only the right hon. Gentleman's speech, and as he understood, the words were: "So much of the increased value as was brought about at the tenant's expense." That might be taken to mean the whole increased letting value, but the right hon. Gentleman would see that, if it was not clear in the Bill, then it would be well to modify the provision. The law was, that it should be divided between landlord and tenant; did the right hon. Gentleman mean to continue that? As there was no answer, then he fell back upon what had been said, that it was the intention to modify the existing law, giving a portion of the landlord's property to the tenant, giving a larger share to the tenant than the tenant had hitherto had. If there was to be an addition to the tenant of his interest upon the money he expended, if there was to be a transfer of a portion of the improvability of the soil, then there would be a transfer of landlord's property. It would not be merely amending and extending the Act of 1881, it would be introducing a new principle which, in conjunction with others, would bring back the interest of the landlord in the land to nothing more nor less than prairie value. The right hon. Gentleman said, the framers of the Act of 1881, and the Parliament, in passing the Act, never intended the definition since given to it; but that proposition he entirely disputed, and would be prepared to show that, both as regards the nature of improvements, and the question of presumption which the right hon. Gentleman now proposed to alter, a deliberate compromise was arrived at between Parties, and with the other House, that the Act of 1870 was to be the correcting Statute as regards the question of improvements; and this view was supported by statements made by the then Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Law) afterwards one of the Judges who decided in the case Adams *v.* Dunseath. If the right hon. Gentleman proceeded with this part of the Bill he must be prepared to justify it on other grounds than that the definition did not carry out the intention of the Parliament of 1881. As regards the question of presumption, the right hon. Gentleman had given a bare outline of the proposals in the Bill, but it seemed to have been determined that as regards the question of evidence in relation to improvements not only would there be a presumption that all improvements were made by tenants, but, in addition, there was to be an abolition of the Law of Evidence.

MR. J. MORLEY : I alluded to cases alleged to have been made before 1850.

MR. CARSON said, he understood that the Law of Evidence was to be discarded in such cases. All he could say was, that if the right hon. Gentleman knew as much as he did of the difficulties of the Law in Ireland with this Law of Evidence, he would hesitate before he took away from Courts of Justice the possibility of arriving at the truth even by this flimsy regulation of the consciences of many witnesses in Irish Courts. The right hon. Gentleman was determined to abolish the time limit. He was going to allow a tenant to come forward and say he remembered that when he was a boy of six he heard his grandfather say that a certain field was all stubble, and see now what beautiful land it was, and thereupon was to come reduction of rent. If that was the intention, let it be done openly, not keeping up a pretence of justice. A similar proposal was in Mr. Parnell's Bill of 1883, and the right hon. Gentleman was the only occupant of the Treasury Bench who voted for that Bill. Naturally, the provision was revived, but if the provision was such as the speech indicated, then the Bill would be found to be overweighted with matter that must give rise to protracted controversy, and might lead to the prevention of the early enactments admitted to be necessary for the amendment of the Act of 1881, amendment to which all Parties in the House would willingly agree. Then, proceeding to another matter, the right hon. Gentleman said the Bill proposed that the tenant should have an allowance from his rent for occupation interest. If he proceeded to enact that, he would be overthrowing the whole principle upon which the Act of 1881 was based. If there was one thing fought out, it was this question of occupation interest, and when the Bill was originally brought in, the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) did propose that in defining fair rent, something should be allowed, very like giving a deduction for occupation interest; but when questioned further he made the following statement, which the Chief Secretary should consider, for the case of the Opposition was that, while ready to support all reasonable amendment of the Act of 1881, they would not be content to transfer another portion of the landlord's property to the tenant. The words of the late Prime Minister on May 26, 1881 were :—

> "This is, however, one subject on which I wish to give an assurance. With regard to the question of fair rent, although the deduction has been an idea, as we think, forced upon us by the interpretation placed on the clause by hon. Gentlemen, we have never once, on any occasion, propounded that method of proceeding as the mode in which we thought fair rent should be arrived at. I disclaim that altogether, and when we get into Committee, we shall be prepared to deal with the clause in that spirit."

Afterwards, when the clause had been amended, the right hon. Gentleman disclaimed any intention of allowing such deduction from rent which would otherwise be due to the landlord. It was upon that basis that the Fair Rent Clause of the Act of 1881 was agreed to by the House and the other Branch of the Legislature. The question of what was the intention of the Act of 1881 could be disposed of by one short quotation from a speech by Lord Carlingford, who conducted the measure in the other House. He was challenged on this point and asked whether it was not meant that the tenant was to have something deducted for his occupation interest, and he said :—

> "He did not know whether the noble Marquess attached much importance to this Amendment or not. It was true the words were not the words of the Government; they were introduced by the House of Commons. They did not make any substantial change. The Government looked upon them as nothing but a general instruction to the Court to give both parties a fair and impartial hearing. He did not see the cause for alarm."

And it was in those words that they had paragraph after paragraph in the Report of the Select Committee based upon the assumption that Parliament had the intention of giving to the tenant a reduction of rent in regard to his occupation interest. All he could say was, that the right hon. Gentleman could not bring this forward as the intention of the framers of the Act of 1881. He had proved by the quotations from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian and from Lord Carlingford, that, so far from that being their intention, it was on the express assurance that no such deduction should be made, that these words were allowed in the Bill at all. He passed away now from what seemed to him practically the most vital part of the Bill, and he came to what he looked upon as a startling innovation, namely, that all tenants were to be let in who had previously had a rent fixed, if it had been fixed within the last ten years. That, to his mind, was a startling proposition. It certainly was a startling proposition, when a tenant had been given a 15 years' tenure, to say now that because they were going to reduce the tenure, they were to take off 5 years from his tenure. They were hardly prepared for such a proposition. This very proposal was made by the right hon. Gentleman's Friends in the Committee, when the right hon. Gentleman had it all to himself, and the House would hardly believe that it came to a casting vote between the interests of the Parties; and the casting vote was that of the right hon. Gentleman. What was his casting vote? That this proposal should not be made. It certainly did now come to him by surprise that, having upon the evidence produced before the Committee come to one conclusion, the right hon. Gentleman was now prepared on a vital principle to throw over his own deliberate judgment. As at present advised they would consider the matter in the light of the right hon. Gentleman's own proposals, made when he had the evidence before him, and of the facts which led him to his original decision. They would await with some anxiety the new facts that had come to light. He was not sure that he could not see the reason for the change. He did not think the Government felt as confident of holding office as they did a few months ago. Hon. Members had gone about Ireland telling people that it would be a great advantage to them to get their cases into Court while the present Government was in power, who, as they felt somewhat shaky, would appoint a few mushroom Commissioners to do the work. He thought there were only two remaining matters of any great importance that he need refer to. The proposal of the right hon. Gentleman as to future tenancies was of course important, but he did gather what its full scope was, and would therefore, rather not criticise it at present. As he understood the right hon. Gentleman, he said that where a present tenancy had degenerated into a future tenancy, and that future tenancy had lasted for five years, the man was again to become a present tenant. He would only ask the right hon. Gentleman this question, did he mean that the present tenancy which had degenerated into a future tenancy was still to be in the hands of the same person? That would make all the difference, for if it was to be in the hands of the same person, the provision would practically only apply to the case of evicted tenants. He wished to be perfectly candid with the right hon. Gentleman, and he hoped this matter would be cleared up, for he would gladly see those evicted tenants whose chain and title had been broken, restored as present tenants; and so far as they were concerned he would be prepared to support the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. He would, however, entirely dispute the advisability of the House now allowing in all future tenancies created since 1883. Nothing could be worse for the tenants themselves, for if all future tenants were to be allowed into the Land Court, contrary to the provisions of the Act of 1881, they would never get any landlord to let a single tenant on to his land the moment he regained it and got it once more into his possession. The result of such a proposal would be that a man who had only been in possession a day would be able to go into the Land Court and claim occupation interest. If there was anything like that in the Bill, it would be entirely opposed to the policy of the Act of 1881, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian said, that while he was prepared to have fair rents fixed for those tenants who were in occupation, he would not be prepared to grant that to future tenants who took the land with their eyes open. As to the proposals with regard to the recovery of arrears of rent, for his own part he was not sure that some modification in that respect might not be wise; but on that point he would only say that he thought the right hon. Gentleman was making a change of a very sweeping character if he enacted that only two years' arrears of rent should be recoverable for the future in Ireland. No one would accuse his right hon. Friend sitting near him of being a bad landlord, but he told him that he never got any rent from Ireland until it had been due for three years. Such a proposal as this, they all knew perfectly well, if carried out must lead to the most complicated relations between landlord and tenant, and he thought it would be wise to reconsider the matter. In connection with this matter the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had referred to the evidence of a learned judge. Well, the right hon. Gentleman had often pronounced strictures upon Irish judges. Might he now pronounce a stricture upon an Irish judge, and say that he thought it would be much better for the learned judge to administer the law as he found it rather than to announce in public that he was not prepared to make decrees in accordance with Statutes? He thought it would be worth the right hon. Gentleman's while to consider whether, while providing that ejectment should not be allowed for more than two years' rent, he would not allow the balance to be recovered like any other debt. There might be some alteration in that direction made in the law of distress. With regard to procedure, the right hon. Gentleman had said that there was to be a classification of holdings, and that there was to be a ratio between the old and the new judicial rents. It was a pity that this point was not discussed in the Committee, when they could have obtained evidence as to how the provisions of the Act of 1887, which established a kind of automatic scheme, had worked in the districts where they had been put in force. He should welcome some automatic procedure which should put an end to the practice inaugurated under the Act of 1881, of imposing on landlords and tenants the burden of vast judicial proceedings. He thought he could promise that all the points raised by the right hon. Gentleman would be considered fairly by the Opposition; but, while they were prepared to amend the Act of 1881, so as to remedy any real injustice that might be done under it, they would have to consider very seriously indeed any proposals that would demolish the foundations upon which the structure of that Act was reared, or which would expose any portion of the landlord's property to fresh confiscation without compensation. Let not the right hon. Gentleman suppose, because the Opposition were not unwilling that an amending Bill should be passed, that they would assent to provisions of a confiscatory character. The introduction of provisions of that kind might prevent the Bill from becoming law. The right hon. Gentleman's own action in connection with the Evicted Tenants Bill of last Session supplied him with an object-lesson to which he would do well to pay attention. The Opposition were prepared last Session to go a long way in the direction of conferring benefits on the tenantry of Ireland, but the Bill was wrecked because the right hon. Gentleman insisted on making it compulsory in respect of the reinstatement of tenants. Now, however, the right hon. Gentleman had seen the advisability of modifying his proposals on this subject. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman had learned something by this experience, and that he would not include in his present Bill proposals which must lead to protracted controversy, and endanger the measure. The result of that would probably be that the tenantry would lose the benefits which they all joined in thinking might be conferred upon them with justice.

*Mr. J. J. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.) thought that, after the speech that had just been delivered, the Debate would have an academic rather than a practical interest for the people of Ireland. The hon. and learned Gentleman had been good enough to say that he would give a fair, if not a favourable, hearing to Amendments of the Act of 1881 on such matters as town parks, demesne lands, pasture and sub-lettings, but to the Amendments on the subject of improvements he threatened an unqualified hostility, describing them as having a confiscatory character. He (Mr. Clancy) regarded all the Amendments of the law proposed in this Bill as of some importance, but chief in importance were the proposals respecting improvements, and if the hon. and learned Member's speech really expressed the views of his Party in that House and the House of Lords on the question of improvement, he feared that this Bill would not pass into law or would only become law in a shape disappointing to the tenants. He understood from the Chief Secretary's speech that the right hon. Gentleman proposed to exclude from the fair rent provisions of the Act of 1881 all the definitions relating to improvements, and all the limitations and restrictions adopted from the Land Act of 1870. That change would be a very important alteration of the law. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman to say in plain words whether the whole increased letting value was to go to the tenants or not, because on the answer to the question would depend the real value of the Bill. With regard to the shortening of the term, he agreed that it would be a monstrous thing, and would lead to infinite trouble and confusion, and possibly to disorder, in Ireland if they had side by side tenants with a 10 years' term and others with a 15 years' term. Another vital provision was the question of true value and specified value. If the provision of law was to be continued whereby every landlord was to come in and buy for less than its market value the tenant's interest, grave injustice would be done, and there would be not sham but true confiscation. He was puzzled by the right hon. Gentleman's statement as to future tenancies, but what he specially wanted to know was whether "grabbers" were to be invested with a statutory term or not. That was the real point so far as the Representatives of the Irish tenantry were concerned. If they were to be made present tenants he should regard the proposal with the utmost possible disfavour. These land-grabbers were at the root, and had been at the root, of nearly all the land troubles of Ireland, because they had been the most efficient agents of the landlords. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to propose that for the next two years the landlords might do anything they pleased in the way of collection of arrears. If the provision stood, there would be addressed such an invitation and incitement to the collection of arrears as might produce the very disorder and trouble the right hon. Gentleman sought to allay. The right hon. Gentleman finally brought forward a proposal in regard to the restoration of the evicted tenants, and his proposal was a revival of the 13th Section of the Act of 1891, with certain modifications which did not appear to be important. In his opinion, that was practically making no change whatever in the law as it stands. The law, as it stands, enabled a landlord to restore his evicted tenant. The evicted tenant might apply to the Land Commission, and if they agreed, the parties could settle to buy the farm. That being so, and no settlements being come to, what was the special virtue of reviving the 13th Clause? He repeated, there was no addition to the facilities already given by the law for the restoration of the evicted tenants. If this was the final proposition of the Government in regard to the question, and if this was the only hope held out to the evicted tenants of restoration, he must say a very sorry state of things had been reached, and one that brought the utmost discredit on the present Government. They all remembered the statements of the right hon. Member for Bradford as to what would happen when the Liberal Party returned to power. Making every deduction for those statements on the ground of their practicability, still, no one would have imagined that the final proposals of the Government would have dwindled down to the diminutive proposal of the Bill now introduced. The proposal was nothing short of a sham. He did not believe that five tenants would be restored under it. It was not as good as the voluntary part of the Bill of last year, because there the machinery would have been greased to some extent by the fact that £250,000 was to be provided to induce landlords and tenants to enter into agreements. This was a mockery of the tenants' claims, and was a sorry ending of the promises and engagements entered into on the subject by Members of the present Government, including the right hon. Gentleman himself. The right hon. Gentleman made a remark which ought not to be passed over by one section of the Irish Nationalists. The right hon. Gentleman answering a question as to why disorder in Ireland was not provided against, admitted that the solution of the question lay in the fact that those in charge of the evicted tenants had been provided with funds during the winter. In other words, the Paris Funds had come to the rescue of the right hon. Gentleman, and he (Mr. Clancy) thought the small party to which he belonged might claim some credit in this matter. They were asked to spend this money some three or four years ago, and had they consented it would not be available now. He was glad to hear, on the highest authority, that the action of his party had resulted so favourably as the right hon. Gentleman admitted, when he said that social order was largely preserved by the fact that the Paris Funds were now available for the evicted tenants. He repeated, that until they saw the Bill, it was impossible to estimate the real value and extent of its provisions, but judging it as a whole, he was sorry to think from the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman, the Member for the Dublin University, that the Bill had only a faint chance of passing into law, either this Session or the next.

Mr. J. A. RENTOUL (Down, E.) said, they had had a very fair and full exposition of the Bill from the Chief Secretary for Ireland—an exposition, in point of fact, which they had expected from the Report which had been tendered by the majority of the Select Committee, and from the statements made by hon. Members during the past few months in different parts of the country. After the speech made by the hon. and learned Member for Dublin University, it seemed perfectly clear that on many of the matters there would not be a great deal of contention on that side of the House, and the First Reading of the Bill would be allowed, no doubt, without a Division. It so happened that his three colleagues, in the representation of County Down, were, from various causes, unfortunately absent, and under these circumstances he would like to make a few remarks upon the subject of the Bill. The statement had been made that the Debate was, in a certain sense, an academic discussion, but he assured the House that the farmers in many parts of Ireland did not regard it in that light. It was to them a very serious and an important matter, and he had no doubt it was an equally serious and important matter to the landlords. This was certainly not the last Irish Land Bill that would be laid before the House of Commons, and he had no doubt whatever that the final solution of the Irish land question lay in the total abolition of landlordism in Ireland. Lord Londonderry, who had held the highest position possible in Ireland, had said, in the clearest and most emphatic terms, that the continuance of dual ownership was in Ireland absolutely impossible; and, as Lord Londonderry was one of the greatest of the Irish landlords, his words could be relied upon. His words could only bear the construction that the dual ownership of land must end in the abolition of landlordism. It was the desire of many, who were on the same side of the House as himself, that landlordism should entirely cease to exist in Ireland, and that the tenants should, in every sense of the word, become the owners of the land; but they were equally desirous that no injustice whatever should be done to the landlords of Ireland. The Act of 1881 created a partnership between landlord and tenant. Before 1870, the landlords were, of course, the absolute and entire owners of the land in Ireland without any restrictions. After the Act of 1870, their powers were somewhat limited, but it was only by the Act of 1881 that the ownership of land was transferred to tenants. At the present time, landlords and tenants in Ireland were in the position of partners, the landlords being the sleeping, and the tenants the working partners, and it was necessary for the House from time to time to regulate the financial relations between these partners. There could be no doubt that the position of the tenants in Ireland had become appreciably worse in the last two or three years, and consequently there was a universal demand for Legislation in the direction of several of the proposals brought forward by the Chief Secretary in his Bill. A statement had been made about the character of some of the meetings that had been held, especially in Ulster, in relation to the Land Question; but many of those meetings had been got hold of and unwarrantably used by Home Rulers for political purposes. He and many others thought that the Land Question really lay at the root of the Home Rule Question in Ireland—that if there had been no Land Question there would never have been any Home Rule agitation. Therefore, they believed that the solution of the one would lead to the disappearance of the other, at any rate to a very large extent. Wholesale attacks had been most unjustly made on the character of the Irish landlords. There might be a few hard and dishonourable men among them, as there were in other classes, but as a body the Irish landlords were honourable and fair-dealing men; and the frank and straightforward way in which the Bill had been received by those who, it might be assumed, represented the landlords of Ireland in that House, might be taken as a proof that the landlords were ready to meet any reasonable proposals with all candour and fairness. It should be remembered, that if the case of the tenants was a hard one, that of the landlords was equally hard. The question was a difficult one, and anything like a settlement would require fairness of spirit on both sides. The proposals of the Bill introduced a considerable number of points, to which only the barest reference could then be made. The first point to which he wished to allude was that of the proposed 10 years' limit. He did not think the Irish landlords would have any objection to that proposal. In fact, he was informed that they would not object to a far shorter limit, but for the difficulty and expense entailed in fixing the rent at the end of the periods. If there were any self-adjusting method by which the rents could be automatically arranged from time to time, the landlords would not object to any limit, however short. In the matter of town parks, some change in the law was certainly desirable. The voluntary clause in relation to evicted tenants would, he believed, be accepted by the landlords with entire satisfaction, for no one would object to relieving, if possible, those strained relations which existed in some cases between landlord and tenant. The most important part of the Bill, in his opinion, and the matter on which the real contest on the Bill would be fought, was that relating to the tenants' improvements. It was a question which loomed very large in the view of the tenants. He believed it would be very difficult, indeed, to frame a clause which would do entire justice to all parties. Therefore, the question would have to be dealt with very carefully; but he hoped it was the desire on both sides to act fairly. The representatives of the tenants, surely, could have no desire to deal unjustly with the landlords. He did not think that any hon. Member would consent to buy his seat at so heavy a price as knowingly to do injustice to either side. He understood, with regard to this point of the tenants' improvements, that, in all cases from 1850 to the present time, the burden of proof as to the making of the improvements rested on the tenant, but now the burden of proof was to be put upon the landlord. He did not think there would be any injustice in this, because the landlord, as a rule, kept books, and it would not be very difficult for him to prove the amount of money which had been laid out by him on the holding. The hon. and learned Member for Dublin University said the Chief Secretary proposed to suspend the entire law of evidence in Ireland. What he understood the right hon. Member to say was that the ordinary laws of evidence that were applied in nisi prius and criminal cases would not be applied, but that that kind of evidence might be adduced that was adduced in pedigree cases, for instance. Whether that was right or wrong, was a question for discussion; but the Chief Secretary's position was not at all a foolish one. The right hon. Gentleman had only brought forward the Bill they expected, and he did not think the hon. and learned Member for Dublin University desired to raise any serious objections, except with regard to improvements. The hon. and learned Member did not represent a constituency of agriculturists, and it was quite possible that Members representing such constituencies did not entertain entirely the views of the hon. and learned Member. Speaking for himself, he hoped the Bill would be read a first time and a second time, and that in Committee they would be able to make such improvements as might be deemed necessary.

Mr. W. E. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) said, it was perfectly true that the hon. and learned Member did not represent an agricultural division. He, however, did represent a large agricultural division in the north of Ireland, and he entirely agreed with the statement of the hon. and learned Member. It was a remarkable fact—he did not know whether it was intentional—that the right hon. Gentleman alluded only very slightly to the proceedings of the Land Committee which sat during the greater portion of last summer. He disagreed with one of the interpretations which the right hon. Gentleman put upon the action of the minority. It never was their intention that the procedure of the Committee should be turned into that of a Royal Commission. The position he took up, not only on the Committee but before his constituents, was that the Committee was not in a position adequately to report to the House, nor indeed to frame any sound conclusions upon the procedure of administration of the Land Acts, unless it had before it some unofficial evidence. The right hon. Gentleman himself felt that very strongly, because at the first meeting of the Committee he himself proposed that in addition to the official witnesses a certain limited number of other witnesses selected from the gentlemen who appeared as legal advisers or as land valuers in the Land Court. The right hon. Gentleman receded from that view at a later stage, but that was no justification for his attempted censure on the minority who adhered to that view. And if the minority complained of his action as the Chairman of the Committee, in deciding by his casting vote to close the evidence and proceed to make an immediate Report, they did so because only just previously the right hon. Gentleman informed them that he thought the best course to take would be to make an interim Report and to apply for reappointment this Session. However, he took it that the right hon. Gentleman, from the manner in which he introduced his proposals, would invite the House to consider them not so much with regard to the conclusions contained in the Report of the majority as upon their own merits. With regard to that Report, he was bound to state that no Report ever made before by a Select Committee was such a complete perversion of the evidence that was given. On one important point—perhaps the crucial point in this discussion—the manner in which tenants' improvements in Ireland had been dealt with by the Courts interpreting the Act, and the manner in which their decision had been administered the Report was misleading, and an absolute perversion of the real state of the facts. It was unfortunate that that should be so, because naturally the minds of a very large body of men in Ireland had been much excited by the unfounded statements contained in the Report. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman would attempt to justify the alterations he proposed to make in reference to the tenants' improvement by the evidence submitted to the Committee, but he ventured to say that any person whose mind was not warped by prejudice would be obliged to admit that that evidence conclusively proved that not only had the letter of the Act of 1881 been carried out, but that the spirit and the intentions of the Act had been thoroughly adhered to. The judgment in Adams *v.* Dunseath was delivered by the then Lord Chancellor, who was the Law Officer in charge of the Bill of 1881, and must have been perfectly aware of the spirit and intentions of the framers of it. The position of the tenant under that judgment was that he received for the improvement work the value of the interest upon it. That varied from 3 to 12 per cent., over and above which he was entitled to the increased letting value which resulted from the improvement. Five lay Sub-commissioners—and they were the only Sub-commissioners who knew anything about the assessment of the value of tenants' improvements—gave much evidence on this point before the Select Committee, and three of them distinctly said that they gave the whole of the increased letting value to the tenants. The fourth said that he seldom met a case where any increased letting value resulted, and the fifth agreed with him. He ventured to say that the whole of that evidence clearly showed that tenants' improvements had been protected in the administration of the Act. The Chief Secretary had sketched the ontline of certain clauses by which he intended to alter the present law, but they had a suspicious flavour of prairie value about them; but he would give these proposals full consideration, and if they were genuine amendments of the letter or of the spirit of the Act of 1881, the right hon. Gentleman would find no stern opponent in him. But that was as far as he was prepared to go. As far as he could judge from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, however, his proposals amounted to tearing up the whole of that Act, while the restrictions which had been deliberately placed in it by the right hon. Member for Midlothian for the protection of the land-owning class were to be completely swept away. Of course these proposals might bear a different complexion when he saw them in print, but he would put it to the right hon. Gentleman that the policy of the Act of 1881 was to protect the tenant and not to ruin the landlord. For that purpose the author of the Act over and over again objected to clauses coming from extreme quarters in the House which had a tendency to deprive the landlord of that to which he was justly entitled, and the measure was full of provisions to protect what the right hon. Member for Midlothian conceived to be the fair and just interest of the landlords in their property. But the Chief Secretary seemed to have rambled through it guided by the sign board of a certain Bill presented to the House last year, and under the disguise of amendments was going to sweep all the restrictions which were inserted for the protection of the land-owning classes in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman had told them during his speech that he had been greatly struck by the enormous cost of administering the Act of 1881, and he thought that anyone who had devoted the slightest attention to the fixing of fair rents in Ireland would agree that a large debt of gratitude would be owing to the individual who devised some automatic procedure by which rents could be fixed without having recourse to the expensive and litigious action necessary at the present time. Such a procedure was of the greatest importance in view of the vast number of rents which would shortly come up for revision at the expiration of the statutory term. The right hon. Gentleman had no opportunity of hearing any but official views on this question, but if the inquiry had been pushed farther he would have heard views expressed in favour of automatic revision. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to his proposal with regard to the status of future tenants, and he based his proposal for amending the Act of 1881 with regard to these tenants on the large number manufactured owing to the operation of Section 7 of the Act of 1887. The Report of the majority of the Committee referred to cases of eviction under the Section, but the Chief Secretary knew as well as he did that they were not cases of eviction at all. It is well known that the number of tenants turned out of their holdings under Section 7 were infinitesimally small as compared with the number of notices served under that Section. He had the figures with regard to the estate of the Marquess of Sligo in County Mayo, and they illustrated, he was certain, what happened in a great number of estates. Down to the 1st January 1895, 605 notices were served under Section 7 of the Act of 1887. Of that number 248 had been dealt with before the six months' redemption had expired—they were not disturbed in their holdings; 275 were dealt with after the six months, and were re-instated, not as future tenants, the landlord having extended their term for redemption, so that 523 tenants had their judicial tenancy not interfered with; 52 were evicted by the Sheriff chiefly on account of family disputes resulting in the re-instating of members of the same family; and in nine cases only were farms let to absolutely new tenants. If the Bill now before the House proposed a genuine amendment of the Act of 1881, in the spirit of that Act he should be glad to give it a fair consideration; but if they found the Chief Secretary embarking in absolutely fresh Legislation which was never intended by the Act of 1881, he must frankly tell him that he should offer a strenuous opposition to the Bill. As to the agitation in the north of Ireland, the Chief Secretary would find himself very much mistaken if he thought it would have any effect with regard to himself or his friends in dealing with his proposals if they were not founded upon justice between the two classes in Ireland with whom it was proposed to deal. The course he should take was the course which he had laid before his constituents.

Mr. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green) said he was a member of the Committee which considered this question, and he should like to make one or two observations with regard to the scheme explained by the Chief Secretary. However much they might disagree with some of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman, he as a lawyer sympathised with the Chief Secretary as a layman bringing before the House an extremely complicated and technical case. The Chief Secretary had done his utmost in the time given him, and ungrudgingly given him—two hours—in giving a very clear exposition of the question. As a awyer, he thought he had been able to follow the greater part of his proposals, but he must confess there were two or three points which he could not follow. In recommending the question to the House as an effort to amend the Act of 1887, the Chief Secretary dissociated himself altogether from the wild and nonsensical language used in the Press and on the platforms in Ireland during the last six months. They had been told in the Nationalist Press that this was a Bill to crush the power of the Irish landlords, and that it would have the effect of transferring two millions sterling of the annual rental of Ireland from the pockets of the landlords into the pockets of the tenants. The hon. Member for South-east Cork in October last said the Bill would strike a blow at landlordism from which it never could recover, and that prairie value was simply common justice. The Chief Secretary had dissociated himself from that language, and he would be very sorry to represent that the Bill would have the effect of transferring 2½ millions or £50,000 of the rental of Ireland from the pockets of the landlords to to the pocket of the tenants. That some Bill was necessary everyone admitted. The minority Report admitted that the Member for Birmingham in this House, and the Duke of Devonshire in the other House, would give to any fair and reasonable measure a careful consideration. Having alluded to the views of Ulster Members, and admitted that the Bill was necessary, that admission upon their part had undoubtedly been the neucleus and foundation for the agitation which had been going on in Ireland for several months. He seconded the Motion for the postponement of the Bill introduced into the last Parliament by the hon. Member for South-east Kerry. The Motion was not for the rejection of the Bill, but was to the effect that having regard to the fact that a Committee was then proposed or had been nominated to inquire into the principles and working of the Irish Land Acts, it was undesirable that the Bill should be then considered. He stated then what he had stated now, that he approached the question with a perfectly open mind, and that the Bill contained several proposals which commanded his sympathy. But the Chief Secretary now asked the House to entertain a Bill of a most controversial and complex character, and one which might possibly—unless the minds of hon. Members who acted with him changed when they saw the Bill—lead to a Division on the Second Reading. He went into Committee with an open mind. He had heard and seen it repeated over and over again that the Irish tenant was rented on his improvements. In his opinion the work of the Committee on the Irish Land Acts was closed before it had properly arrived at completion. The Report dealt with wholly official evidence. The Chief Secretary said that the Report had been characterised as one-sided. He himself had never heard it called one-sided. But what had been said was—and he himself had said so—that it was founded wholly on official evidence. The Amendment moved on 24th July 1894, in Committee, showed that was the ground on which the Ulster Members objected to the evidence being closured. The hon. Member for South Tyrone proposed that the Committee should proceed to report, and he himself moved an Amendment that, having regard to the terms of reference, it would be unfair and unsatisfactory that the Committee should report until it heard the evidence of non-official witnesses, and those witnesses whose evidence had not been concluded. That was the position which the minority took up. The Committee heard the evidence of Mr. Justice Bewley, Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, and several legal Sub-commissioners, but as to outside evidence they did not hear a single word. Three days of non-official evidence was given as a concession. That time was utilised to the best of their ability. Three witnesses were examined, and these were all the non-official evidence. On one subject the evidence given before the Committee (official as it was) removed any doubt as to the Irish tenant being rented on the improvements in respect of which he was entitled to be exempted from rent. The evidence of every witness was, that before the landlord got anything in the nature of increased letting value the tenant got at least 5 per cent.—in some cases, witnesses said, 10 and 12 per cent.—on his improvements. What did Mr. Justice Bewley and others who were examined tell the Committee?—that that 5 per cent. on the improvements swallowed up the increased letting value as the result of improvements. But they admitted that it was in a small proportion of cases indeed in which there had been an increased letting value of more than 5 per cent. In "Adams *v.* Dunseath" the Judge decided that if there was any overplus it should be divided between landlord and tenant, according to their respective interests. The Chief Secretary said the Land Commission went in the teeth of that and did not carry out the decision of the Court of Appeal. Three Sub-commissioners admitted that they went in the teeth of it and gave an increased letting value of 5 per cent. to the landlord. But three Lay Commissioners who went over the ground and were responsible for the amount of rent fixed, told the Committee that in every case the tenant got every farthing of the increased letting value. He had seen it stated in the Press categorically that the effect of the evidence before the Committee was, that the landlord in every case got the overplus of letting value and the tenant got his 5 per cent. He hoped English and Scotch Members would take notice of the fact that under the administration of the Act of 1881 in Ireland the Irish tenant got in every case from 3 to 5 per cent. on his improvements, which, in a great majority of cases, exhausted the whole of the increased letting value. When the Chief Secretary spoke of the increased letting value, did he mean the prairie value or the reverse? Did he mean something intermediate and intend to let the Court puzzle on, as it was now puzzling on, to find out what were the respective interests of landlord and tenant? He said the tenant was to get the benefit of his improvements, but the increase was to be proportioned according to the respective interest of landlord and tenant. Of all the vital questions which this Bill would give rise to, the question as to the increased letting value and unearned increment and the inherent capabilities of the soil was of the most substantial character, and the House ought to have been told in clear language whether for the purposes of the improvement he meant to adopt the 5th section of the Bill introduced last year by the hon. Member for South-east Kerry, providing that the Court should ascertain whether any improvements had been made by the tenant for which he had not been compensated, and estimate the increase in the letting value which should be deemed to be the property of the tenant. Did he mean that the benefit of the inherent capabilities of the soil was to go to the tenant, because if he did he would go in the teeth of the law as it stood on the subject in England. The Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, provided that there should not be taken into account as part of the improvements of the tenant what was justly due to the inherent capabilities of the soil. Was he going to apply, as far as the capabilities of the soil were concerned, a different rule to Ireland from that which obtained in England? Under the Agricultural Holdings Act in England any increase arising from the inherent capabilities of the soil did not go to the tenant. Did he intend to hand over whatever arose from the inherent capabilities of the soil to the tenant, or did he intend to divide it between landlord and tenant according to their respective interests? Passing from the inherent capabilities of the soil the Chief Secretary dealt with the limitations incorporated into the Act of 1881 from the Land Act of 1870. He doubted whether the improvements swept into the net of the landlord were of the substantial or large character which had been described by the Chief Secretary. In the 4th Section of the Act of 1870 he found a provision dealing "with works not suitable to the holding." Presumably from the right hon. Gentleman's observations a tenant was not to have his rent fixed from the date of the passing of this Bill upon works that were unsuitable to the holding. The Crofters Act of 1886 provided in the 8th Section that, when a crofter was removed from his holding, he should be entitled to any permanent improvements provided that they were suitable to the holding; but now a distinction was to be drawn between the rights of the Scottish crofter and the Irish tenant. The Irish tenant, no matter what he might do, was to get the value of his work, no matter how unsuitable it might be to the holding. The Chief Secretary was really making a holocaust of free contract, because no matter what kind of contract the tenant might have made he was to get a judicial rent fixed and the benefit of these improvements, though he might have received value for them from the landlord. The Chief Secretary, indeed, proposed by the Bill to hand over the inherent capabilities of the soil and to eliminate from the Act of 1881 the unsuitable improvements and improvements made in pursuance of a contract for valuable consideration. The right hon. Gentleman differentiated the cases of Scotland, England, and Ireland, and was applying to Ireland a wholly different law from that which existed either in England or Scotland at the present time. [Mr. J. MORLEY: "Hear, hear!"] If, then, a leading Member of the Government approved that course in a Bill of this kind with regard to Ireland it might not be long before the Government applied the same principles to English and Scottish holdings. The right hon. Gentleman also dealt with the question of presumption in making improvement, though he had not gone the whole length of the recommendations of the Committee with reference to that point. The Chief Secretary had laid down a time limit so far back as 1850. With respect to improvements before 1850 any kind of evidence appeared to apply that might be given before a Sub or Head Commission or a County Court Judge. This left the question of presumption in a very unsatisfactory position, and it would hardly commend itself to any jury. The right hon. Gentleman closed his statement by referring to another branch of the landlord and tenant trouble which did not form a part of the recommendation of the Committee, namely, the introduction of the 13th Section of the Act of 1891. The hon. Member for South Hunts had told the House that the question of the evicted tenants was settling itself in Ireland. The Queen's Speech, however, assured the House that there was a source of danger to social peace in Ireland. He doubted this. The Duke of Devonshire had pointed out on the Second Reading of the Evicted Tenants Bill that the question was settling itself, and the noble Duke gave as a test from the date of the Mathew Commission up to the date he was speaking that there had been 128 restorations, either by purchase or otherwise, of evicted tenants, which was at the rate of 14 per cent. on the evicted holdings of the 17 selected estates. He believed the same process was going on now. The Chief Secretary knew the efforts that had been made in various districts of Ireland to inflame popular feeling on that subject since the Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords last year. But there had been no agitation as the result of the throwing out of that Bill. Any attempt to force such an agitation would have no result. The Chief Secretary appealed to the House to give the Bill fair and impartial consideration, and that he certainly was quite prepared to give to the Bill; and, unless he found the Bill to be of such a controversial character, and of such a nature as to amount to further transfer of the annual rental of Ireland from the landlord to the tenant, he was disposed to vote for the Bill.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said that his hon. Friend described himself as the representative of an urban constituency—that was to say, he represented people who knew nothing about this question, or who, at all events, felt no real interest in it. He, however, happened to represent a rural constituency—a typical rural constituency — consisting almost entirely of the class who would be affected by Legislation of this kind. He was not, therefore, prejudiced in considering a matter of this kind, and, if he thought any proposals in the Bill were likely to do injustice to the landlords of Ireland, nothing would induce him to vote for such proposals. It certainly did not follow that, because a representative of farmers, he should advocate a policy of robbing landlords. The Duke of Argyll, in one of his letters on the Land Question referred to the Report of the majority of the Committee as emanating from men wholly devoid of independence and simply representing tenant farmers; and upon that he might repeat what he had often said—that in Committee and in the House he had given votes that he was perfectly certain many tenant farmers in Ulster would not approve. Representing a constituency deeply interested, he desired to express the conclusions at which he had arrived, on the statement made by the Chief Secretary, not, of course, pledging himself on the First Reading to all the complex details of the Bill. For all practical purposes the Bill divided itself into two main parts—that which dealt with tenants' improvements and that which dealt with the exclusions from the Act of 1881. These constituted the real essence of the Bill. The importation of the 4th Section of the Act of 1870 into the Act of 1881 was a most important thing for the farmers of Ireland. The question was so clear that the wayfaring man could understand it. In 1881 Sir Stafford Northcote tried to incorporate that section with the Act then passing, but he was defeated by a majority of 134, and yet, in spite of that, six months later, the Court of Appeal did incorporate that section. For his own part, he had nothing to say against the 4th Section of the Act of 1870 when it was confined to its own sphere. When a tenant was quitting his holding by eviction or other cause, and when money compensation had to be paid to the outgoing tenant by the landlord, then there was reason in taking all these circumstances into account, the length of time of enjoyment of improvements and all else; but when it became a question of transferring the 4th Section, intended for the case of a man leaving his holding, to the case of a man who wished to stay on his holding and for that purpose tried to get a fair rent fixed, then the conditions were entirely different, and the section had no application whatever. It was entirely foreign to the intention of the authors of the Bill of 1881 and contrary to the wish expressed by the majority of the House at that time. It was said by his hon. Friend that 5 per cent. was allowed to every tenant who made improvements, but then every decision of the Land Court in Ireland was subject to this 4th Section of the Act of 1870. It was the duty of the Government to divorce these two Acts—the Act of 1870 should stand on its own footing and the Act of 1881 should stand unencumbered by the Act of 1870. In this particular the Chief Secretary had done well, and had done what was right, taking from the landlord nothing that the landlord could honestly claim. The question of presumption was discussed at great length in the Committee, and the evidence, maimed as it was, all went to show that the improvements in Irish land had mainly been effected by tenants. What the Select Committee said was that when tenants had made improvements the law should follow the fact, and that they ought to belong to the tenant until the contrary had been proved. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to carry that out. The landlords said that that might result in prairie value. He, for one, when he gave his vote in the Select Committee, never contemplated that they were going back to the Ulster settlement, and that the tenant was to claim everything done since. The right hon. Gentleman had put in the limiting clause that was in the Act of 1870 that the presumption was not to extend behind 1850; but he seemed to say that the Court should have power, upon evidence which was not legal, to go behind 1850. He should be glad to go behind 1850 in any case which the Court thought was a special one and one in which wrong was likely to be done by the enforcement of the limit; the Court should have power to go behind it, but upon legal evidence. So far as the right hon. Gentleman proposed that the presumption should be in the tenant's favour, he was entirely with him upon that point. He did not think there was any serious question behind 1850. As regarded buildings, they were admitted to belong to the tenant now. As regarded drainage, no question could arise behind 1850: and the question would arise only in cases of reclamation: and all cases of necessity would be met by allowing the Court to have discretion to go behind 1850 upon satisfactory evidence. The question of increased letting value, as Mr. Justice Bewley said, was more academic than real; and for all practical purposes, if Section 4 of the Act of 1870 were out of the way, the percentage now allowed would meet the great majority of cases. That was the evidence of every witness before the Committee; but cases arose in which the increased letting value had to be decided for the past 14 years, and, upon the legal evidence, had been decided wrongly; and the landlord had got that which, according to Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, he ought not to have got. No fixed percentage was mentioned in the Committee, and he should be prepared to leave the percentage to the discretion of the Court. He looked upon the matter in this way—the land and its inherent capacities belonged to the landlord; and the tenant had his improvements—the dwelling, the out-offices, the drainage, the reclamation, and whatever he had done. He also had, however, a valuable asset in the shape of the permanent occupation of the land which Parliament had conferred upon him. It was said by his constituents—but he did not agree with them—

> "This land has been conveyed to us by a 15 years' lease; we have got the land and its inherent capacities at a certain rent; and, therefore, they are ours."

If that were so he would agree with them; but the rent of the land was not fixed with that inherent capacity in view; if it were it would revolutionise the whole process of rent-fixing and double the rent. Rent was fixed upon the land as it appeared to the Commissioners when they went upon it. He did not ask that anyone should be robbed of his fair share of the increase of letting value due to capital acting on inherent capacity; but he did ask that the Court should decide how much was to go to the landlord and how much to the tenant. On the question of improvements, as a whole, he was exceedingly glad the Bill seemed to be drawn on lines he could approve and support, subject to differences of opinion on points of detail. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to have steered a fair course, and one that he could support pretty well all round. In regard to exclusions from the Bill, the question of town parks was one of the most difficult that could arise. In 1887 the hon. Member for Galway moved that the population limit should be 5,000. The Government resisted that, and then he moved that the limit should be 2,000. The Government, of which the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Brodrick) was a Member, accepted that; but it was rejected in the House of Lords and did not become law. He thought the distinction between accommodation lands and land held for the purpose of making a profit by farming was a vital distinction, but proposals might be made in Committee on which he desired to hold himself free. As regarded pasture holdings, they were practically excluded from the Act of 1881. It was then said that the graziers could take care of themselves, but the revolution that had taken place since 1881 in the cattle trade disposed of that argument; and he unhesitatingly said that, whatever chance the tillage farmer, with the labour within his family, had of making a livelihood out of his farm, the holder of a pasture farm had very little at the present moment. He agreed with the £200 limit, and believed it would exclude the large graziers in Dublin, and to his mind would bring in all the real farmers who lived upon their holdings. A great deal had been said on the question of sub-letting; he had as much objection to sub-letting or sub-division as any man, but he held that the proposal of the Chief Secretary was a radical cure for it. The landlords raised a cry against sub-letting, but it was not the sub-letting they objected to, but the fair rent. He came now to the question of the statutory term, and on that he said to the Committee, and he said it now, that he thought it a most dangerous thing to teach the people of Ireland, or any other people, that judicial contracts were simply made to be broken, and he gave effect to the opinion he held by his vote. He still held that opinion. He might be told that it was done in 1887, but it was done then under the strain of great distress, and if it had been said then that it was to be a precedent he very much doubted whether the strain of distress would have induced him to countenance it. The evidence, however, before the Select Committee went entirely to show that the rents fixed between 1881 and 1887 were too high now. There was not a single witness who did not say so. If, then, they were going to shorten the statutory period, were they going to take these thousands of men, whose rents were shown by the witnesses before the Committee to be too high, and keep them at their present rents for seven years? But suppose they said,

> "We have evidence that these rents are too high, and we will shorten the statutory period in these cases,"

there was another difficulty they would get into. Every man whose rent had been fixed since 1887 would believe that those rents had been fixed on a wrong view of the question. He put it to the House, were not these grave difficulties when they calmly sat down to settle a question like this? He admitted that there was simply a choice of difficulties, and he was not very sure that the Chief Secretary had not chosen the easiest way out of them. He now came to the question called occupation right, and he asserted that there was nothing to warrant the consideration of occupation right as an element in the fixing of rent under the Act of 1881. This complex and difficult topic was not raised in the Committee by hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, but by Mr. Justice Bewley in his evidence. He was far from saying that an Irish tenant had not an occupation right; the Act of 1870 made it clear that he had such a right, because it allowed compensation for physical disturbance, apart from the question of improvements. This right was a valuable asset, and had always been treated as such in Ulster, but he quite failed to see how it could be brought in as an element for consideration in the fixing of a fair rent. If it were brought in, the interests of the tenant would very probably suffer. If, for example, a farmer were to go into Court and say that he had built a house, drained the land and reclaimed it, and, in addition, that he had an occupation right which he valued at £300, having regard to his present rent, there were some Land Commissioners who would bow him out of Court on the ground that he had no claim to have his rent reduced. Respecting the question of future tenancies he felt some responsibility for the support which he gave to the Seventh Section of the Act of 1887, which was commonly known as the "Eviction-made-easy" Clause. He supported that clause because he thought that it would render physical eviction unnecessary. He had since, however, felt positive alarm in consequence of the number of eviction notices that had floated across the country. Not less than 40,000 had been served since 1887. He might be told that the landlords, after the notices were issued, came to terms with their tenants, but they had no proof that that was the case, and the truth was that the tenancies were determined, and they did not know what became of the tenants. He welcomed, therefore, the proposal to confer the *status* of a present tenant upon a man who had been made a caretaker, who had done well for five years, who had paid his rent, and with whom the landlord had come to terms. On this point he was happy to be in agreement with the Chief Secretary. As to the right hon. Gentleman's automatic plan for fixing rents, he could only say that it would be just as easy to fix a ratio between gold and silver as to fix the ratio contemplated by the right hon. Gentleman in connection with farms. He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would put that part of his plan in his pocket. He had often been told he was not an Irishman, but he knew one trait the Irish people had got—they dearly loved what they called law-day. Coming, in the last place, to the question of the evicted tenants, he should have preferred that it had been treated in a separate Bill, but he admitted that, inasmuch as the Leader of the Opposition had incorporated the 13th Section in a general Land Bill, the case which the Chief Secretary made for doing the same thing was complete. He pursued rather a difficult course on the evicted tenants question last year, and he rejoiced exceedingly that the Chief Secretary and hon. Members opposite had been able to agree on a clause which he thought the House would have very little difficulty in sanctioning. These people had been evicted, and they would have been evicted under any Government. He held last year, and he held now, that three-fourths of the cases might be settled by voluntary arrangements. The great drawback of the 13th Section was that there was no provision for bringing the landlord and the tenant together. That had been removed, and whatever the landlords were, they were shrewd enough in matters of money; and, inasmuch as both sides were heartily tired of this controversy, he should imagine that the forecast he made last year would be found to be not far out when the testing-time came. Speaking for the great mass of the Protestant farmers of Ulster, he wished to say that, apart from technicalities and without binding himself to matters of phraseology, he believed this Bill in spirit and in fact was a good, a satisfactory, and an honest Bill. Reference had been made to the agitation that had been going on in Ulster. Having had something to do with the initiation and the conduct of it throughout, he could tell the House and hon. Members opposite that if they hugged to their bosoms the idea that that was an agitation of Home Rulers who were using the land question for ulterior objects they would be rudely awakened. Foolish speeches, even from the point of view of tactics, might have been made; but he asserted that four out of five meetings held in the province had been held by Protestants who were Unionists to the backbone, who did not desire to rob their landlords, who felt that the Act of 1881 had miscarried on these points as regarded them, and who were determined that these things should be put right before a second statutory term was entered upon. The Bill reversed Adams *v.* Dunseath in the vital points where that decision required to be reversed, and he would be a bold man who would go to Ulster either before or at the General Election and defend Adams *v.* Dunseath against the Chief Secretary's Bill.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh) said, they had been told this Bill was to be a scorcher, framed with the distinct object of striking a blow at Irish landlords, from which they would never recover. He read speeches made at meetings in Ulster, at some of which the hon. Member for South Tyrone was present, and from the tone and character of the speeches made, with which to a certain extent the hon. Member apparently sympathised——

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL begged pardon. He said at Belfast there was no greater enemy of land reform than the man who went about talking of this being a scorching measure. He added that such a man ought to be locked up.

*COLONEL SAUNDERSON retorted that if the hon. Member who uttered those words were to be confined it would not be for the first time. On one point he entirely joined issue with the hon. Member for South Tyrone, and that was the taking away, as undoubtedly this Bill had done, the limitation of 1850 in the Act of 1870 with regard to the presumption of improvements. If his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary had been able to state that that limitation had not been taken away he should with great satisfaction not oppose the Second Reading of this Bill. He and those who acted with him were entirely in favour of a satisfactory solution of this question. As the House had been reminded by the right hon. Gentleman, he supported the Land Bill of 1870. He said then, and he had never regretted it, that he supported the Land Bill for two reasons—because he believed it gave to the Irish tenants a protection which they absolutely required; and because he believed it would satisfy the English. He remembered when, in 1870, he made that statement the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian asked him what he meant; and he replied that he hoped it would satisfy the English, for he knew it would not satisfy the Irish. He thought his prophecy as to not satisfying the Irish had been amply fulfilled. To listen to the speeches made from time to time in the House one might be led to believe that the Irish tenant farmer was, without exception, the most trampled on specimen of an agriculturist to be found in the world; whereas Parliament had been legislating and conferring benefits upon him at least for 25 years, whilst the right hon. Gentleman had told them that so far from having concluded the operation of doing justice to Ireland they were only at the commencement. In fact, according to the right hon. Gentleman, this Bill was a sort of preliminary canter; that before the year 1843, 32 Bills had been brought in on the subject of Irish land, all in favour of the Irish landlord and against the Irish tenant; and that now a commencement had been made on the other side, and Bill after Bill was to be brought in to compensate for their former injustice. What a happy prospect! He thought this country was beginnining to believe that a very considerable amount of justice had already been meted out to the Irish tenant. Very soon after the Bill of 1870 the Irish tenant was taught he had not had half enough, and that this was only a foretaste of the good things to come. The tenants then demanded the three "F's"—fixity of tenure, fair rents, and free sales; and the Irish land agitators at that time pointed out that, if they got this policy adopted, they would be in a better position than any tenantry in the world. They did get it, and they were just as full of misery and woe, and of the demand for justice from England as ever they had been before. They had free sale, fair rents—["No!" *from the Irish Benches*]—hon. Members who said "No!" believed they ought to pay no rent; but reasonable men believed the Irish tenants had got fair rents, which were fixed, not by the landlords, but by a court established by that House. With regard to fixity of tenure, the Irish tenants simply meant by that, that they would be certain of being able to remain in their farms so long as they paid a fair rent. But since then they had had the phrase "duality of ownership," which implied that the tenant in Ireland had a property in the land as well as the landlord. He absolutely denied that any duality of ownership had been established by that House. Speaking on June 21, 1881, the right hon. Member for Midlothian said:—

> "Our view is that when a tenant puts improvements on the holding, they become part of the holding, and both landlord and tenant have an interest in them—the tenant, a limited interest in respect of tenant-right, and the landlord a permanent interest as owner of the whole."

The agitation that existed in Ireland, but which no longer existed, was based on the idea that the tenant was as much the owner of the land as the landlord; and the part of the Bill to which he objected was that which proposed, if he understood it aright, to give the tenant not only security for the money he had laid out on his holding, but to give him also the whole value of the farm acquired by that expenditure. That would give the tenant a distinct ownership in the soil; and against that he (Colonel Saunderson) protested, and would continue to protest. If his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary had refused to go beyond the limit of 1850 there would not be so much between them. But his right hon. Friend proposed that the presumption of improvements might go back behind 1850.

Mr. J. MORLEY said, there was no presumption behind 1850. The presumption then expired, and evidence was required.

Colonel SAUNDERSON said, that at any rate a claim could be made for improvements effected before 1850 if the Court were satisfied on some kind of evidence that they were made by somebody. That was the sting of the Bill. He did not know who suggested such a proposal. He believed that if the Chief Secretary were left to himself he would never have put it into the Bill. He believed the proposal had been suggested to the Government by that part of their following who kept them in office. [Mr. T. M. Healy.—"Never; on the contrary."] Some of the eminent leaders of the Nationalist party did, he had no doubt, suggest the proposal to the Chief Secretary, though the hon. Member for Louth might not have been the one. But if that proposal did not exist—and he regretted very much that it did exist—both sides of the House would have been willing to give the Bill a very fair consideration. There were many things in the Bill with which he was inclined entirely to agree. He was in entire accord with the right hon. Gentleman's desire to fix the *status* of the new tenants, and all his colleagues exactly felt with him on that point; but he regretted at the same time that the right hon. Gentleman did not see his way to make it a cheaper operation for landlord and tenant to get fair rents fixed. That would be the most unpopular thing in the world amongst lawyers; the lawyers were the only people that had fattened on the land in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman, however, gave them a plan. He knew why the right hon. Gentleman proposed it. It was because it might otherwise be said the right hon. Gentleman did not produce a plan of any kind. The right hon. Gentleman, however, did not seem to like the plan himself, and, no doubt, the House would hear no more about it. The right hon. Gentleman twitted the Irish landlords on the happy position in which they found themselves with regard to reductions in rents.

> "You have only given reductions amounting to 20·8 per cent.," said the right hon. Gentleman, "and you are in a far happier position than the landlords on this side of the Channel."

But before they compared the reductions in both countries they should find out whether the rents were higher in England than in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, when introducing the Land Bill of 1870, dealt with that very point. The right hon. Gentleman then said that in 1779 Arthur Young estimated the agricultural rental of Ireland at six millions. In 1869 it had been raised to 12 millions—that was, doubled. In 1771 the agricultural rental of England was estimated at 16 millions. In 1869 it had been raised to 48 millions—that was, raised three times in amount. In Scotland in 1770 the agricultural rental was estimated at £1,200,000; and in 1869 it had been raised to £7,200,000. He believed that one thing would become evident after the conclusion of that Debate—namely, that the Irish people, although they did not always get the credit for the most wisdom, had solved the agricultural question. The right hon. Gentleman knew well that the Returns from the joint stock and savings banks in Ireland showed that the Irish people had vastly increased their savings. How was it that the Irish contrived to do that, and that agriculturists on this side of the water could not? The Irish farmer had proved that the farm that paid best in these days was the farm that could be worked and managed by the farmer. In Ireland they had small holdings, so small that it was a physical impossibility for the owner of the estate to work the farmstead. These small farms in Ireland, just as in France, paid their way, and there was in Ireland at the present moment a far more thriving population than there was 30 or 40 years ago. Agriculturists in this country were in deep distress, and he thought the time had come when this country might learn a lesson from her smaller sister. The proof that they had solved the question in Ireland and that the farmer thrived was shown by the immense price which the free-will of a farm fetched at the present day. It was idle to talk about land hunger; the Irishman knew which side his bread was buttered, and if he went into the market and gave 20, 25, or 30 years' purchase for a farm, depend upon it he did so because he believed that the farm would pay him well. He thought the Bill would pass through the House without very much opposition if the right hon. Gentleman would consent to make some small alteration in it, which would not cost him very dear, and which would satisfy the Irish people if they meant fair play. He said most distinctly, on behalf of the Irish landlords, that they were unwilling to receive rent on the money made out of improvements by the Irish farmer; and if this Bill aimed, as it ought to aim, at giving the Irish tenant perfect freedom to get all he could out of his improvements, it would receive their most cordial support. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had alluded to an extraordinary method adopted by some of the Land Commissioners in reducing rent on the occupation interest. He ventured to think that an ordinary Englishman, Scotchman, or even Welshman, would not have the remotest idea what that meant, because it was a thing which could not be conceived by anybody but an Irishman. The occupation interest of a tenant he took to be what a farm was worth if it could be sold. They must remember that the occupation interest was granted by Parliament to the Irish tenants without, in most cases, their ever paying one single farthing for it. It was only in a small part of Ulster that they had paid for it in times gone by. Now, he had endeavoured to lay before the House the views the landlords would take of this Bill. So far as the Bill meant fairplay, and no more than fairplay, to the Irish tenants, it would receive their cordial support; but so far as they believed the Bill struck at the very foundations of property in Ireland, they would strenuously oppose it. The tenants of Ulster, to whom the hon. Member had referred, thoroughly understood the meaning and importance of establishing the rights of property. They knew well enough that if you destroy the rights of property for the present landlords, those rights would be swept away from the landlords who followed. If the tenants availed themselves of the Purchase Acts, they would become the future landlords. The tenants quite knew that. Surprise had been expressed that the tenants had not availed themselves more largely of the Purchase Acts. Why had they not done so? Because month after month and day after day they had been told to hold their hand, for if they did so, they would get the land at prairie value. If the House only showed that it was determined not to go a step beyond what was fair and just—that it would put its foot down on any attempt at injustice to any class, the Irish tenants would soon avail themselves of the advantages of the Acts. As far as he was concerned, he should give the Bill fair consideration; but if it remained unaltered, if it retained a principle which he looked upon as dangerous in the extreme, he should be compelled to oppose it, though with great regret.

*MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) said, the most remarkable feature of the Debate was that up to that time no prominent Member of the Irish Party had taken part in it.

MR. T. M. HEALY (North Louth): You wanted to move the Adjournment; that is why we have not spoken.

*MR. BRODRICK said, that at any rate they should be glad to hear the hon. and learned Member when he chose to address the House, for it was very important that the House should understand what was the attitude of hon. Members on the Nationalist Benches with regard to the Bill. The Chief Secretary had told them that the Bill was mainly based on the Report of the Committee. Hon. Members representing the Irish Party had told their constituents that a Bill based on the Report of the Committee would have the effect of largely reducing the rents in Ireland, even to the extent of 50 or 60 per cent. They had also said that such a Bill would strike a blow at Irish landlordism, from which it would never recover. Why were not these statements made in that House? If the responsible Nationalist Members held such opinions let them fairly and openly state them. If they were so stated, however, he thought the House would look very closely into the scope of the Bill. The Debate for some time had been confined to Ulster Members, as if the Bill mainly or only concerned the people of Ulster. He had not the slightest objection, of course, to hon. Members from Ulster speaking strongly on all matters which concerned their constituents, but he would point out that this Bill was not intended for Ulster alone. It concerned the other provinces of Ireland also. The Bill was one which would apply, as previous Land Acts had done, legislation incident to the Ulster custom to the whole of Ireland. He believed the premature closing of the Committee had two or three unfortunate results. The question of improving and cheapening the procedure under the Act of 1881, was, perhaps, the most important submitted to the Committee, but the evidence upon it was entirely from officials. He believed that the money value involved in the question of improvements would, in some cases, not amount to very much compared with the law costs which would be involved. He grudged every farthing spent in law costs in connection with the land question in Ireland; and he thought those internecine struggles ought to be brought to a close. His earnest desire in the Land Committee was to obtain suggestions from unofficial witnesses as to how litigation could be avoided, and he regretted that the Chief Secretary declined to treat the minority with that generosity—he might also say that fairness—which characterised him in his public utterances and his public bearing. The result was, that they were called upon to discuss a onesided Bill on imperfect evidence. He would gladly have seen more evidence brought before the Committee for the benefit of the Member for South Tyrone. The hon. Gentleman had thrown out that he was not prepared to transfer to the tenant such an amount of the value of his improvements as was due to the inherent capabilities of the soil.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I have never occupied any other position.

*Mr. BRODRICK said the hon. Member had signed a Report which stated—

> "that there appears to be no reasonable and no intelligible cause for denying to the tenant the full enjoyment of any improvements in his holding produced by the expenditure of his capital or the application of his labour."

The Report proceeded to say that the interference of Parliament was required in order to ascertain and secure to the tenant his right to the improved letting value.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL explained that the Report originally contained the following words:—

> "Your Committee for these reasons recommend that no rent be allowed in respect of any part of the letting value resulting from the improvement of the tenant."

These two lines were struck out on his motion.

*Mr. BRODRICK could only say that competent lawyers did not take the same view as the hon. Member of the effect of the paragraph as it now stood. He could not believe, unless he had it from the Chief Secretary, that the right hon. Gentleman intended to go back on the expressed intentions of the Act of 1881, which gave the tenant no claim in the inherent capabilities of the soil. He believed the reception of the Bill would depend largely on the way in which that point was dealt with. With regard to the right of preemption, he thought there were grave objections to the course the right hon. Gentleman had taken. There were reasons for it in Ulster, but what the right hon. Gentleman had done, or was going to do, was to give a tenant the right—and he could give case after case, in the South-west of Ireland—to sell his occupation interest for an indefinitely large sum, although he had never paid a farthing for the holding, and could show no improvements whatever upon it. By thus removing the safeguard of the Act of 1881 against a tenant, giving in tenant right the equivalent of a reduction in rent, the old evil effects of land hunger would be restored. The course which the right hon. Gentleman would pursue therefore, was not only subversive of the public interest, but of the policy in which successive Land Acts had been introduced. It would be impossible for them on this side of the House to accept that provision in the Bill. The question of town parks was also one which interested them deeply and they would have to go closely into it in the subsequent stages of the Bill. They were willing however to suspend their judgment on the Bill until it was placed in their hands, and were prepared to discuss the suggested Amendments fairly and honestly, and although they did not take up a *non possumus* attitude, yet, as the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin had pointed out in unmistakable terms, some of the propositions which had been foreshadowed by the Chief Secretary would meet with strenuous resistance from that side of the House. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would make an earnest attempt to meet the wishes of both Parties, and would not force them to reject what might be made a good Bill by endeavouring to create a favourable impression on the present tenants in Ireland, at the expense of those who came after.

Sir THOMAS LEA (Londonderry, S.) said, the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken seemed to think there were some provisions in the Bill in which there had been no legislation before, but as a matter of fact, they were really the corollary of previous Bills all of which he had supported since and including the Act of 1870. They were merely protecting, as they ought to protect, the interests of the tenants and the rights of the soil. He understood the Chief Secretary to say that presumption was to lie in the interest of the tenant up to 1850. With regard to the statutory period, opinion had changed since 1881 and it was now in favour of not a longer, but a shorter period than 15 years.

Leave being given, MR. MORLEY brought in the Bill, which was read a first time.

CONCILIATION (TRADE DISPUTES) BILL.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.), in asking leave to introduce a Bill to make better provision for the settlement of trade disputes, said, it was not necessary to say much, as the House was familiar with the reasons why a Bill of that kind was necessary. Many efforts had been made to deal with the question, and this fact of itself was sufficient to show its great urgency and the great need for endeavouring to provide some means by which arbitration could be extended. Every one knew the amount of injury done to trade, and the suffering caused to the labouring classes by these disputes. There were those who thought that a Government department should in many cases take the initiative in bringing about conciliation; others had thought that voluntary effort should be attempted; and others, again, thought that much might be done by giving power to Local Authorities. This Bill went somewhat further than the Bill introduced last year. He should state what the purport and nature of the Bill was. The first clause would provide that where any difference arose between an employer and workmen the Board of Trade might, if it thought fit, inquire into the circumstances and invite the parties to meet under some person recommended by the Board of Trade, and accepted as an impartial person. Although the Board of Trade might exercise that power now, additional strength would be given by such a provision. Further, the Bill proposed to provide that a Board of Conciliation ought to exist, which did not now exist, or, if it did exist, was not adequately constituted. The Board of Trade might appoint a person to inquire into and endeavour to facilitate the work of the Board of Arbitrators. Then the Bill proceeded to give power to county or borough councils to create boards of conciliation either for the whole district or a particular trade, the boards to be constituted in such a way as the local authority should see fit. Then the Board of Trade was to be empowered to commit to any duly constituted board of conciliation—whether constituted at its own instance or by a local authority—certain powers which it would otherwise not enjoy, including power to require the attendance of witnesses and the production of certain documents. These powers were carefully guarded. They were only to be intrusted to the particular board, and where, in the opinion of the Board of Trade, a clear case had been made out. It had been thought that these powers should be given to boards of all kinds. but this would be going a little too far. The Bill empowered the Board of Trade to keep a register of boards of conciliation and arbitration, and to record in it the constitution and proceedings of the boards; and it also directed that a report should annually be presented to Parliament of proceedings under the measure. The Government desired to draw a distinction between conciliation and arbitration. They proposed to give the utmost encouragement to the formation of boards of conciliation, and to give the parties to a dispute power to make the conciliator or conciliators the arbitrator or arbitrators if they thought fit. He hoped the House would allow the Bill to be read a first time, discussion being reserved for the Second Reading. The Bill would then be sent to a Grand Committee, where its provisions might be thoroughly examined. It was not only a non-partisan Bill, but one of those Bills in which it must be their object to ascertain the wishes of employers and employed, and see that, whatever measure was passed by the House, it was received with cordiality by them, and was one which they would give effect to and which would tend to put an end to the evils which were so much deplored.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN complained that the right hon. Gentleman had failed to deal with the crux of the question, and to give the House any idea whether these boards of conciliation would have power to make their decision final. If not the Bill would be absolutely useless. If people were inclined to arbitrate and come to an agreement, then they would agree, but unless they were willing to agree such Bills as this were worthless.

The noble Lord was speaking at Twelve o'clock, when by the Rules of the House, the Debate stood adjourned.

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND) (No.2) BILL

On Motion of Mr. CLANCY,

Bill read 2°.

WITHDRAWAL OF STRANGERS DURING DIVISIONS.

MR. W. P. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) moved—

"That Standing Order No. 92 (Withdrawal of Strangers during Division), be read and rescinded."

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HERBERT J. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) said, the Resolution was only the formal carrying out of the unanimous recommendations of a Committee which sat last year, and it was made in the general interest of Members and of Strangers who sat under the Gallery.

*MR. SIDNEY HERBERT (Croydon) said that, in these circumstances, the Motion was one that ought to be moved, not by a private Member, but by a Member of the Government. A matter involving a change in the Orders of the House ought to be proposed by a Member of the Government, after consultation with the Speaker.

*MR. HERBERT GLADSTONE said, he did not wish to put, or to appear to put, any responsibility on the Speaker, with whom he had communicated as a matter of courtesy. He supported the motion entirely on his own official responsibility.

*MR. SIDNEY HERBERT said, after that statement, it would be better that the matter should stand over until the right hon. Gentleman could consult with his colleagues.

MR. W. P. BYLES said, perhaps it would be better that he should be allowed to withdraw the Motion, and that the right hon. Gentleman, as Chairman of the Committee, should put it down in his own name. He should be sorry to have it thought that he desired to encroach on the privileges of Official Members. As no one else had done so, he had put the Motion down, thinking it would be for the convenience of the House that it should be passed.

Motion then, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTIONS.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

"On Motion of Mr. Sydney Buxton, Bill to amend the law with respect to Customs Duties in the Australian Colonies."

Bill presented and read a first time; to be read a second time this day, and to be printed. [Bill 157].

CHARITIES (DIVERSIONS) BILL.

"On Motion of Mr. Cyril Dodd, Bill to enable the Charity Commissioners to restore to Charitable Purposes Property which has been diverted, and to prevent future diversions."

Bill presented, and read the First Time; to be read a Second Time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 158.]

House adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 5th March 1895.

WILD BIRDS PROTECTION ACT, 1880, AMENDMENT BILL.

*THE EARL OF **JERSEY**, in moving that this Bill be read a second time, said that it was brought in at the instance of the Middlesex County Council, and the object of it was to amend the Act of 1880, under which the Secretary of State had power to declare a close time during which wild birds should not be shot, by enlarging the time mentioned in the Act. The county of Middlesex suffered greatly from eruptions of a certain class of sportsmen, who went out on Saturdays and Sundays and shot birds in the hedgerows, to the great inconvenience, and even to the danger, of the inhabitants. The effect of the Bill would be to give the Secretary of State power, on a County Council passing a resolution with that object, to extend the close time beyond the breeding season. He understood that the Government approved of the general object of the Bill, subject to certain Amendments to be moved in Committee. The promoters of the Bill would be only too glad to adopt any Amendment which would make the Bill easier to work, if the principle of the measure met with the approval of the House.

Bill read 2ª.

SOLICITORS (IRELAND) BILL.

LORD **MACNAGHTEN**, in moving that the Bill be read a second time, said that it had been introduced at the instance of the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland, and the object of the Bill was to assimilate the law relating to solicitors in Ireland to that which prevailed in England. In Ireland the governing Act was the Act of 1866, which was founded on the English Act of 1860; but the English Act had been amended since in many particulars in which improvements had been made in the law. The intention of this measure was to place the profession in Ireland on the same footing as the profession in England with regard to the qualifications, admission, and discipline; and the Bill consisted almost entirely of details with which he should not be justified in troubling their Lordships; in fact, it consolidated the provisions of the English law and applied them to Ireland. If the Bill were read a second time, it would be reasonable to allow a sufficient period to elapse before the Committee stage in order to enable those who were interested to make themselves acquainted with the details. He had brought in the Bill with the concurrence of Lord Ashbourne and Lord Morris, who had promised to give him every assistance in carrying it.

LORD **ASHBOURNE** said, he was entirely in favour of the Second Reading of the Bill, and hoped it would become law without any delay. The solicitor profession in Ireland, as in England, were represented by an Incorporated Law Society, and that was represented by a council composed of the leading men of the profession, men who were sincerely anxious to promote its honour, to secure its dignity, and to serve and advance the cause of public justice. This Bill merely sought to obtain for the profession in Ireland the privileges and rights which had long been enjoyed by their brethren in England; and he was satisfied that if it passed into law it would be found to be, on the whole, a most advantageous measure.

THE **LORD CHANCELLOR** (LORD HERSCHELL), said the Irish Government had no objection to this Bill. It seemed reasonable to assimilate in the manner proposed the law of the two countries.

Bill read 2ª.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BILL.

Passed through Committee and reported without Amendment.

House adjourned at Fifteen minutes to Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 5th March 1895.

The House met shortly after Three of the clock.

QUESTIONS.

IRISH LIGHTS COMMISSIONERS.

Mr. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether (1) a system of apprenticeship exists in the Marine Department of the Trinity House Service in which the apprentices are specially educated for the requirements of that service, and by examinations qualify as officers of their lighthouse and buoy steamers; (2) whether the Irish Lights Commissioners demand special training from their men before being promoted to the rank of officers, and whether qualifications or standards are required of them; (3) and whether the Board of Trade have sanctioned the Trinity House system, and do they require that officers in lighthouse services should undergo special training?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): The answer to the first question is yes; and the expense involved in the training of apprentices for the Trinity House Service is, like all other expenditure from the Mercantile Marine Fund, subject to the control of the Board of Trade, who, however, make no special requirements beyond such as the Trinity House impose. The Irish Lights Commissioners inform me that there are no apprentices in their Service; and that all officers in their service possess Board of Trade certificates of competency for the appointments they respectively hold.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman still adheres, after that answer, to the previous answer that the Board of Trade has no control over the Trinity House?

Mr BRYCE: I never made any such answer.

THE IRISH BOARD OF LIGHTS.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for the St. Patrick Division of Dublin (Mr. W. Field), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that the Irish Board of Lights is at present mainly constituted of members who have been co-opted, save and except the four representatives of the Dublin Corporation; (2) whether complaints have been recently received from Belfast, Queenstown, and Galway; (3) whether the Irish Lights Board is responsible to any authority; (4) and whether the Government will bring in a Bill this Session to reconstitute this Board?

Mr. J. BRYCE: The case is as stated in the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question. Belfast, Cork, and other ports are desirous of having representatives on the Board of Irish Lights and have made representations to this effect, which are now under considera. tion. The Commissioners of Irish Lights are subject to the financial control of the Board of Trade, and cannot erect, place or alter lighthouses, buoys, or beacons, without the approval of the Trinity House, and the sanction as regards finance of the Board of Trade. The duty of initiating proposals rests with them. The constitution of the three Lighthouse Authorities in the United Kingdom has been brought before the Committee now sitting on the Mercantile Marine Fund, and I do not think I ought to come to a conclusion in the matter until I have seen their report. There seems little prospect that any legislation on the subject can be proposed this Session.

NAVAL MANŒUVRES.

Mr. JOHN PENN (Lewisham): I beg to ask the Admiralty whether any requests for an increase in the engine-room complements have been received from the captains of Her Majesty's ships and, if so, what ships; and, whether any restrictions are placed upon the development of indicated horse-power during the Naval Manœuvres?

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. Robertson, Dundee): While it is not usual or necessary to make public the communications passing between captains of Her Majesty's ships and the Admiralty, I may inform the hon. Member that no question of any importance has been raised since the Secretary to the Admiralty answered his question of the 19th March, 1894; no special restrictions are imposed for manœuvres, and the regulations of horse-power laid down in the Queen's Regulations apply to ships whether commissioned for ordinary service or for manœuvres.

KINGSTOWN HARBOUR.

MR. W. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that 35 men have been recently discharged at Kingstown Harbour; and that only about five of those men received the allowance usually granted to men in the employment over 15 years, although many of the employees were in the work for a much longer period; whether those cases are under consideration; and whether certain work requires to be done at Carlisle Pier and other places?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): Twenty men have been discharged at Kingstown since May 1894, of whom 13 had 15 years' service. Of these seven were discharged for age or infirmity, and have received gratuities. The remaining six were discharged in consequence of alterations in the system which rendered their services unnecessary. It has been decided after consideration that the Treasury has power to give gratuities in such cases, and it will be done. There is work being done by the Board at Carlisle Pier and elsewhere in Kingstown, but the number of hands employed is sufficient for it.

THE IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

MR. W. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the report of the actuaries in charge of the investigation into the financial stability of the Irish National School has yet been completed; and if so with what result; and whether the report will be furnished to the House, and to the National teachers who contribute so largely to the fund?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Several reports have been received from the Actuaries. They are now considering certain questions which the Treasury has addressed to them, bearing on the extent to which the ultimate liabilities of the Fund exceed its assets, and the best means of re-establishing its solvency. There is no reason to doubt that the Fund is sufficient to secure the full pension of every existing teacher. When the results are finally established they will be communicated to the teachers.

ENGLISH GIRLS AT AMSTERDAM.

MR. W. CROSFIELD: On behalf of the hon. Member for Nottingham, Rushcliffe (MR. JOHN ELLIS), I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has now received a report from the British Consul, Mr. Robinson, at Amsterdam, with respect to the case of the girl who alleged she was refused permission to remove her personal property on leaving a situation in that city; and, if so, what is its nature, and particularly what assistance did the Consul give to the girl in appealing for justice to the Dutch police authorites as suggested by him?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SIR E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): A report has been received. The Consul states that two girls called upon him and asked for his assistance in recovering their luggage, which had been detained by the proprietor of the Café Chantant "Casino." The Consul at once applied to the police, who readily gave what help they could, but it appeared that the proprietor had made advances to the girls, through the London Agent who engaged them, and refused to give up the luggage until he had been repaid. The girls stated that they left because they were expected to mix with the male visitors and to encourage them to drink, and they considered that the London Agent had not given them a fair account of the situation. The proprietor said there was no dispute between him and them, except that he could not continue to employ them. The third girl left some days ago for London, and it does not appear that she was detained against her will. The Consul seems to have given his attention directly he was appealed to, to have taken a good deal of trouble to get at the facts of the case, and to have done all that was possible in the circumstances which I have described.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to a statement made by Annie Nightingale to Mr. Bushby at the Worship Street Police Court on Friday last, indicating a system of sending girls to the Continent for immoral purposes by an agent in York Road, Waterloo Road; whether he has caused inquiry to be made into the facts; and, whether he can inform the House what means, if any, are taken, or can be taken, to prevent such a traffic from being carried on?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): From inquiries made by the police, I am unable to say that any offence punishable by law has been committed in this country. The agent Houghton, at the instance of the proprietor of the Damrack Music Hall, Amsterdam, engaged and sent out Alice Norton to fulfil an engagement there on January 16th, and Mr. Houghton has furnished the police with a letter from Norton in answer to Houghton's inquiries on the 20th, in which she did not say anything against the character of the music hall; and on 30th January Mrs. Nightingale and a Miss Stewart went out. Mrs. Nightingale repeated to the police the statements made before the magistrate. The girl Norton came back from Amsterdam, at her own expense, to refute the statement made in the newspapers for the sake of her family; but she returned to Amsterdam before she could be seen by the police. The police exercise the utmost vigilance in all cases where they have reason to believe that there is anything illicit or criminal of the kind suggested, but it would not be expedient to state what are the measures they take.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): May I ask whether it is not the case that in some places on the Continent, girls who go over report themselves to the British Consul, and whether the right hon. Gentleman will communicate with the Foreign Office with a view to this practice being followed at Amsterdam?

MR. ASQUITH: The hon. Member must give notice of that question.

PRIVATE POST CARDS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether the only objections to a reduction of the fee of 2s. 6d. per quire for stamping private post cards are the cost of additional machinery and the impossibility of providing additional space at Somerset House; whether the recent introduction of post cards with adhesive stamps has resulted in a very great diminution in the number of private post cards sent to Somerset House to be stamped; whether he has observed the statement in a Treasury Minute, dated 6th August 1894, on the effects of the permission to use adhesive stamps on private post cards, that the Post Office gains from an economical point of view; under the present system the small margin of profit (about £22,000) on the material is insufficient to cover the loss entailed by selling the cards, and any diminution in the supply of official cards will diminish the cost of handling, &c.; and, further, that the reduction in the stock will not only lead to a saving estimated at about £20,000 a year, &c., but will further set free a great amount of valuable space in Somerset House; and, whether, in order to extend the use of private post cards, and so diminish the loss on the sale of official post cards, he will recommend the reduction of the fee for stamping to a figure proportioned to the charges for stamping envelopes and book-post covers, and direct that some of the space saved at Somerset House shall be utilised, if necessary?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The objection to which my hon. Friend refers is not the only objection, but it is a serious one. Since the introduction of post cards with adhesive stamps the work of stamping post cards at Somerset House has so far diminished that the machine, which was at one time exclusively engaged in this stamping, will now be occasionally available for other work. It is a great advantage to have this reserve of mechanical power for times of pressure. I am acquainted with the Minute of August 6th, but my hon. Friend is in error in referring to a saving of £20,000 a year. The reduction of stock, which was rendered possible by the extension of the contract, is in progress, and will lead to a saving of about £20,000 this year, and a similar amount next year. But there will be no annual saving after that. The economy of space has not proved as great as was expected, owing to the fact that the diminished stock has been distributed over a relatively greater floor-space, the old system of packing having been discovered to be dangerous to the structure. Moreover, any space that has been, or may be, economised in Somerset House, is urgently wanted for the Inland Revenue Department, which is much cramped for room, the space under their control being barely sufficient for the discharge of the proper business of the Government.

LABOURERS' PLOTS.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to a recent resolution of the Baltinglass (County Wicklow) Board of Guardians, in which it is alleged that the Arbitrator of the Board of Works has awarded for the Labourers' Plots taken in the union compensation at the rate of 30 years' purchase on the estimated annual value, or nearly 40 years' purchase upon the Government valuation; and, whether this statement is true; and, if so, by what rule, or basis of valuation, is the Arbitrator guided in such cases.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am informed by the Board of Works that the compensation awarded to owners and occupiers in the case in question amounts to about 30 years' purchase of the estimated value. The Board are not able to state the proportion borne by the compensation of the Poor Law valuation. Of the entire compensation, 20 years' purchase of the estimated value was awarded to the owners, in accordance with the proposal made by the Guardians in their schedule, and with the sworn evidence produced by them. The remaining 10 years' purchase was awarded to the occupying agricultural tenants. The schedule deposited by the Guardians, proposed that these tenants should receive a sum of £4 each all round, with additions in two cases for certain buildings. The Arbitrator was bound to inquire into the circumstances and character of each plot, and, having done so, carefully awarded to each tenant the sum to which he considered him entitled, which was in all cases in excess of the amount proposed by the Guardians.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if, in view of the acute distress prevailing in many parts of Ireland, the Government will consider the question of granting loans to landlords and occupiers upon the same terms as loans were granted in 1881, and for the same purposes.

MR. J. MORLEY: The question of granting loans in connection with, and as a means of alleviating, the distress existing in parts of Ireland, has been carefully considered by the Irish Government, and it has been decided that such a policy would be of doubtful benefit to the classes who are in want of employment, and would be open to other and obvious objections, some of which I pointed out in the course of the Debate on the Address, when the subject of distress was under discussion. I may point out that under the provisions of the 10th Vic., cap. 32, and the Land Law Act of 1881, large advances have been made to both owners and occupiers for land improvements, and that in the opinion of the Irish Government the provisions of these Acts, which are still operative, fully meet the cases of persons who require loans for such purposes.

SIR T. ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if any representations have reached him from the Killorglin district of county Kerry relative to the distress prevailing there; and, whether, with a view of giving temporary employment in the locality, one of the most congested in the county, and averting starvation in many families, he will consider the question of immediately finishing the Glasha and Knocknaboola roads, already begun by the Board of Works, so that they may be fit for traffic by the end of April?

MR. J. MORLEY: Representations to the effect stated in the first paragraph have been received. Very careful inquiries have been made into the condition of this district, and the Local Government Board do not think that, at present, any necessity exists for adopting exceptional measures to relieve distress. The outdoor relief is normal, no fresh applications have recently been made to the relieving officer, who reports favourably as to the condition of the people. Potatoes at the last market in Killorglinwere plentiful,the price ranging from 4d. to 4½d. per stone. The people appear to be now all engaged on the spring work, which, it is stated, is going on well since the change of weather.

MR. J. P. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the destitution prevailing in the union of Castletown Beerhaven, county Cork, and whether he intends taking steps to alleviate it. The hon. Member further asked the right hon. Gentleman whether the permission of the trustees of the Bantry estate had yet been obtained for the erection of the boat-slip at Trafrask.

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board state that, so far as they have been able to ascertain, there is not at present any unusual destitution in this Union; that the fishing has been good, and with improved weather will be a great source of income to the people. The stoppage of the work on the boat-slip at Trafrask has caused some hardship to a number of families in that locality, but I was informed this morning by the Congested District Board that the permission of the trustees has now been obtained for the erection of the slip, and that directions have been given for the recommencement of work without delay.

TWEED FISHERY ACTS.

MR. H. J. TENNANT (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is able to state the steps which Her Majesty's Government propose to take in view of the general discontent arising out of the Tweed Fishery Acts, to place the Laws regulating the salmon fisheries of the valley of the Tweed and of the district adjacent to what is known to the Law as the mouth of the Tweed on a more satisfactory footing?

MR. R. A. ALLISON (Cumberland, Eskdale): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is now prepared to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the laws affecting the salmon fisheries in the Solway Firth, and the inequalities which exist between the English and Scotch sides of the estuary; and if he can say when the Commission will be appointed?

MR. BRYCE: Her Majesty's Government are aware of the difficulties which have arisen in connection with the salmon fisheries of the Tweed and the Solway, and of the consequent need for fresh legislative provisions on the subject. I have consulted with my right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland, and it is now proposed to advise Her Majesty to issue a Royal Commission to deal with the subject. The reference to the Commission will be as follows:—To inquire into the fisheries of the Solway Firth and the salmon and freshwater fisheries of the river and estuary of the Tweed, including all the portion of sea comprised in the operation of the present Solway and Tweed Acts, with the rights affecting the same, the methods of fishing there used, the nature of the said industry, together with the laws applying to the said fisheries; and to report thereon and make such recommendations relating thereto as they may think fit.

MR. F. NAPIER (Roxburgh) asked whether the terms of reference would include the rivers Ettrick and Tevior.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would extend the scope of the inquiry to those other parts of Scotland where similar grievances existed.

MR. BRYCE said the grievances in connection with the Solway Firth and the Tweed were somewhat different to those in other places, and, as they referred to a separate and distinct area, would have to be inquired into without raising other questions. He understood, however, that the inquiry would practically cover all the salmon and freshwater fisheries.

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire) gave notice that he should move to include the rivers of Inverness.

SWINE FEVER.

MR. F. A. O'KEEFFE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been directed to the report of the proceedings of the Limerick Board of Guardians on Wednesday last, at which two resolutions were passed, as follows, first:—

> "That, having regard to the statements of the representatives of the pig trade in the South of Ireland, that there was no reason for continuing in force the recent Order of the Privy Council in reference to the sale of swine in Ireland;"

and, secondly—

> "That a resident inspector be appointed for Limerick by the Veterinary Department, having power to re-issue movement licences, and to extend the time for export of existing licences, and that the cost of inspecting and marking be defrayed out of the public funds;"

and what effect will be given to those resolutions?

MR. J. MORLEY: Attention has been directed to the report of the proceedings of the Limerick Board of Guardians on Wednesday last, at which the two resolutions referred to in the question were passed. In regard to the first resolution it should be borne in mind that the Order has only been in force since the 11th February. The effect of its working is being closely watched by the Veterinary Department, and if, as I have already stated, it should be found that unnecessary restrictions are imposed on the bacon industry, the question of their modification will be considered. With respect to the second resolution, it does not appear that there is any necessity to station an Inspector of the Department in Limerick for the purpose of issuing movement licences; but the Government will be prepared to approve the appointment by the Local Authority of any suitable person for the purpose. The cost of inspection and any other expenses that may be necessary for the carrying out of the Order in the Union are payable by the Local Authority as a part of their expenditure in the execution of the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894, and the Orders thereunder. One half of the amount of such expenses will be recouped to them by the Veterinary Department from the General Cattle Diseases Fund. The marking of swine should be done by and at the expense of the owners.

BOAT-SLIPS IN KERRY.

SIR T. ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Congested Districts Board will consider the advisability of constructing slips for canoes at Ardnaganna and Ballinrannig, in Smerwick Harbour?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Congested Districts Board inform me that they have been obliged to postpone for the present the consideration of the proposal to construct boat-slips at the places mentioned in the question.

INFLUENZA.

MR. J. AIRD (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board if he has seen his way to re-issue the Memorandum of 1892 as to the precautions advisable at times when epidemic influenza threatens or is prevalent; and if, during the prevalence of the epidemic, the Local Government Board have authorised, or if not, if they will authorise, medicine and additional restoratives being given to the sufferers?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Sir WALTER FOSTER, Derby, Ilkeston): In view of the further experience obtained by the Board's Medical Department since the issue of the Memorandum of 1892, I am of opinion that no useful purpose would be served by the re-issue of that document; and, having regard to the natural history of influenza, it is doubtful how far its prevention can be facilitated by the issue of an additional memorandum. But, as there appears to be a demand for some further guidance as to such measures of prevention as can be adopted, the Board's medical officer is now preparing a new memorandum, which shall be issued with the least practicable delay. The Board have not authorised medicines and restoratives being given to sufferers from influenza, and it does not appear to them that the circumstances are such as to render it necessary that they should adopt such an exceptional course.

MR. AIRD asked whether the Local Government Board, in view of the distress in the Metropolis, would give further consideration to the question of authorising medicines and additional restoratives being given to the sufferers?

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) asked what the hon. Gentleman meant by the natural history of influenza; did he mean the microbes?

*SIR WALTER FOSTER said he would give the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of reading the Memorandum. With regard to the previous question, he repeated to the hon. Member that the Board did not think it necessary to take such a course, but if any fresh evidence came before the Board calling present action, it should certainly be considered.

THE HIGHLAND LAND BILL.

DR. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will introduce the Highland Land Bill, and take a First Reading upon it pending the issue of the Report of the Highlands and Islands Commission; and, can he explain why the issue of this Report is so long delayed, and can he take any steps to expedite its production?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan and Kinross): It is not proposed to introduce the Bill until the Report of the Highlands and Islands Commission is in the hands of Members. The maps are now in the hands of the Stationery Office, and will, no doubt, be issued at the earliest possible moment. In the opinion of the Government, the Commission has brought its work to a conclusion as soon as was compatible with its being thoroughly well done.

DR. MACGREGOR asked why the Report, which was agreed to two months before, had not been issued with more despatch?

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR said, the delay was owing to the preparation of a number of valuable and important maps printed in different colours.

DR. MACGREGOR asked why the maps had not been put in hand long ago, in order to save this delay?

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR explained that that was done on the earliest opportunity. Some delay, was however, unavoidable, because these maps covered a large extent of territory.

THE WEST HIGHLAND RAILWAY COMPANY.

DR. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he has yet decided as to the merits of the claim for compensation made by the Commissioners of Fort William against the West Highland Railway Company for the non-fulfilment of the agreement understood to have been come to between parties, as to a roadway and footpath between the railway and the shore of the loch on which the town is situated.

MR. J. BRYCE: The Board of Trade have no power to decide a claim for compensation for an alleged non-fulfilment of an agreement. The dispute between the parties appears to resolve itself into a purely legal question.

DR. MACGREGOR asked whether the Board of Trade were not able to interfere in this matter?

MR. BRYCE said, they were not able to do so except as a mediator.

ALLEGED ILLEGAL TRAWLING.

DR. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state the result of the recent visit of H.M.S. *Starling* to Barra to investigate complaints made by the local fishermen of depredations committed by trawlers within the three-mile limit; and, whether, in the interests of fishermen on the coasts of Barra, Harris, Skye, the Moray and Pentland Firths, what further means, in addition to the existing sea police, of protection is he prepared to supply in the circumstances?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR (answering in the absence of Sir G. O. TREVELYAN), said: Following on the representation made by the hon. Member to the Secretary for Scotland last month, H.M.S. *Starling*, under orders from the Admiralty, proceeded to Barra, but was unable to procure any definite proof of illegal trawling. She is now, it is understood, detailed for duty on the north coast of Skye, in consequence of complaints received from that quarter. I may add that as stated by the Secretary for Scotland in this House on the 21st ultimo, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty are, in addition to the work done by the vessels placed at the disposal of the Fishery Board, rendering much assistance in despatching cruisers for the protection of the fishing industry.

ROADS IN THE HEBRIDES.

DR. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will be able to render further help this year toward making roads in the outlying portions of the Hebrides, especially the Uists, Benbecula, and Harris, where in many districts there are not even footpaths to enable children to attend the schools in safety?

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR: The Secretary for Scotland hopes to have a certain sum placed at his disposal for the general purpose indicated, but I am unable on his behalf to make any statement at present as to how the money will be allocated.

FEUS AND LEASES IN SCOTLAND.

DR. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate, whether the Government contemplates legislating this Session on the lines of the Report made to Parliament by the Select Committee on Feus and Leases in Scotland; and if he can state when a Bill on this subject is likely to be submitted for the consideration of the House?

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR: A Bill has already been prepared to give effect to one of the most important recommendations of the Commission—namely, to provide for the acquisition by Local Authorities, voluntarily or compulsorily, of land for workmen's houses; and also to simplify the procedure for the acquisition by Local Authorities of land for the purposes for which they have already power to acquire it. The Bill will probably be introduced shortly.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Government are prepared to assent to the Resolution lately passed by the Board of Education in Ireland, and thus to facilitate the extension of grants to the schools of the Christian Brothers and to Church schools?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am quite unable to make any statement upon this subject at present.

MR. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Has the right hon. Gentleman received a copy of the Resolution passed by the Board?

MR. J. MORLEY: Yes, I have seen it, but I can assure the hon. and gallant Member that nothing will be gained by hurrying a discussion upon this subject.

COLONEL NOLAN: May I hope to have an answer to the question next week?

MR. J. MORLEY: I should say that hope would be very vain indeed.

CRIMEAN AND INDIAN MUTINY PENSIONS.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many Crimean and Mutiny men have applied for the special pension; how many have received it; how many have applied from workhouses; and, if only 100 are granted yearly, how long the last man applying will have to wait?

*SIR J. LENG (Dundee) asked the Secretary of State for War whether, having regard to the rapidly diminishing numbers of Crimean and Indian Mutiny veterans, it can be arranged to grant special pensions to all such as are certified to be well-conducted and deserving men in need of assistance, even if not absolutely destitute.

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley): The Secretary of State is in communication with the Treasury on this subject, and he hopes, in making his statement on the introduction of the Army Estimates, to be able to announce to the House the decision arrived at.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND MR. SADLER.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education what salary Mr. Sadler is paid, and out of which Vote until 31st March, 1895; and why, as this is a fresh office, it is not included in the Supplementary Estimates?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): Mr. Sadler does not enter upon duty till the beginning of the new financial year, and his salary will only run from that date. Hence there is no charge on this year's estimates. The salary is £650, rising by annual increments of £25 to £800.

MR. BARTLEY asked whether it was not a fact that 300 Inspectors, all of whom were suitable to fill the office, had been passed over by the appointment of Mr. Sadler.

MR. ACLAND: The most suitable was selected for the office.

IMPORTATION OF ARMS INTO BRASS.

MAJOR DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether 1,500 rifles were lately imported into Brass, in the Niger Coast Protectorate; and whether such importation is contrary to the Brussels Act; and, if so, whether a searching inquiry will be made into the whole circumstances connected with such importation?

Sir E. GREY: Such importation is contrary to the Brussels Act, and, as was stated last Thursday, the question of how the natives came to be possessed of a large quantity of arms of precision is one of the circumstances which will be inquired into.

CONLAN ESTATE, COUNTY WEXFORD.

Mr. P. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the tenants on the Conlan estate, County Wexford, were in treaty, in Mr. Justice Monroe's Court, to purchase their holdings under the Land Purchase (Ireland) Act; that the Norwich Assurance Company has been permitted to step in and purchase the property at a less price than the tenants were willing to pay; and that this company has proceeded to issue ejectments and writs against the tenants; and whether, in the interests of the peace of the locality, and to prevent charges on the ratepayers for extra police, he will be prepared to recommend that the tenants be permitted to purchase their holdings on this estate as originally agreed upon?

Mr. J. MORLEY: This question was only placed on the paper this morning, and, as I have not had sufficient time to inquire into the facts, I must ask my hon. Friend to defer the question until Thursday.

ST. MARK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL, FINSBURY.

Mr. T. SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education (1) whether the sanction given by the Education Department, in October, 1891, to the St. Mark's National School, Old Street, Finsbury, to charge a fee of twopence per scholar, under section 4 (1) of the Education Act, 1891, was given on the assurance conveyed by the managers in their letter of 1st September, 1891, that they had provided for French, shorthand, book-keeping, science, and advanced vocal music to be taught; (2) whether the promised subjects of instruction have appeared in the school time table for any year since October, 1891; and (3) whether, seeing that the report of the school for the year ending 30th April, 1894, shows that these subjects were not taught during that year, and that no children were presented in specific subjects, he intends to continue his sanction to the special fee?

Mr. ACLAND: The statements in the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question are correct. I am not able on such brief notice to give precise details as to school time tables for the years since 1891; but it appears from the correspondence, that last year, at all events, no classes were being held in either the boys' or the girls' school in any of these subjects, nor were any children presented in specific subjects. The managers were, therefore, informed by the Department on the 18th December last that the sanction to special fees would be withdrawn as from the end of the school year now current, and that thenceforth any fees charged must be within the limit prescribed by Section 2 of the Act of 1891.

CHARGES OF INTIMIDATION IN COUNTY CAVAN.

Mr. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a meeting of the Irish National Federation was held on 6th December, 1894, near Virginia, county Cavan, at which the hon. Member for Cork (as reported in the *Drogheda Independent* of 8th December, 1894) urged the establishment of a branch that would rouse public opinion against landgrabbers in the neighbourhood, and make them feel that it was not the pleasantest way of passing one's life; whether he is aware that subsequently a placard headed "Down with landgrabbing and the grass taking of evicting landlords" was extensively posted in the neighbourhood of Virginia; that certain persons are being prosecuted for acts of intimidation towards Hugh Moore, of Lisnafund; whether Mr. Fitzsimons who moved a resolution at the meeting above mentioned, is the Mr. Fitzsimons who has recently been appointed to the Commission of the Peace for the county Cavan; whether Mr. Tierney, who presented an address to the hon. Member for Cork on the same occasion, is the Mr. Tierney who has recently been appointed to the Commission of the Peace for the county Cavan; and whether the prosecution of those proceeded against for intimidating Hugh Moore will be brought before the Petty Sessions at which these magistrates are entitled to sit; and, if so, whether the attention of the Lord Chancellor has been called to the matter, and will steps be taken to prevent these magistrates taking part in the proceedings of the Court before which these prosecutions are to be brought?

MR. J. MORLEY: The facts are substantially as stated. The prosecutions referred to will, it is expected, be heard on the 7th inst., and will take place at a sessions at which Messrs. Fitzsimons and Tierney are entitled to sit as magistrates. It does not, however, appear that either of these gentlemen is implicated in the proceedings in respect of which the prosecutions now pending have been directed. Should the Lord Chancellor, who has been communicated with, have any reason to think otherwise, he will take any steps that may be necessary.

THE MARQUESS OF SLIGO AND CO-TENANCY.

CAPTAIN DONELLAN (Cork, E.): On behalf of the hon. Member for North Tipperary, Mr. William O'Brien, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether his attention has been called to the system of co-tenancy on the estate of the Marquess of Sligo, by means of which the landlord evades his legal liability for poor rates on holdings valued at or under £4 a year by combining a number of small holders in one tenancy; (2) is he aware that occupiers valued at less than £4 are thus charged with poor rates, from which the 6th and 7th Vic. c. 92 directed they should be exempted, and that they are at the same time declared ineligible to vote for Poor Law Guardians, and have no voice in the administration of the poor rates, which they are wrongfully compelled to pay; (3) are these co-tenants at present imploring the Government for assistance to save them from starvation; (4) whether the name of the Marquess of Sligo as immediate lessor appears on the face of the rate books as the person primarily answerable for poor rates in such cases; (5) will directions be given to the rate collectors to proceed against the immediate lessor for the future for the recovery of the rates; and will any provision be made in the forthcoming Land Bill to prevent evasions of the law in such cases by means of so-called "voluntary agreements?"

MR. J. MORLEY: I am aware that the Poor Relief (Ireland) Commissioners in 1887 called attention to the system of co-tenancy and the payment of Poor Rates on the property of the Marquess of Sligo. As to the second and fourth paragraphs, the Local Government Board are informed by the clerk of the Union that there are yet a number of co-tenancies on this estate, and in all cases where such holdings are valued under £4, Lord Sligo is rated as immediate lessor primarily liable for the rate. He does not, however, pay the Poor Rates. These are paid by the occupiers, who, being valued under £4 and not being rated, are not entitled to vote at Poor Law elections. Lord Sligo lodges a statement of claim to vote as immediate lessor liable for rates in respect of the holdings of these under-rated tenants. As to the fifth paragraph, directions have frequently been given to collectors to proceed against Lord Sligo for the rates due by him as immediate lessor. The guardians took proceedings by Civil Bill against him for the amount due, as a test case, in 1881. The case was dismissed at Quarter Sessions, and an appeal was then lodged by the guardians and heard at Mayo Spring Assizes in 1881. The appeal was dismissed and the occupiers declared liable for the rates on the ground that the townland was held in one letting as a co-tenancy, and that the valuation book did not show a separate area of holding for each tenant, although the valuation of each was given separately. Similar decisions have been given by Judges of Assize on two occasions since then, and, as Lord Sligo has therefore three decisions in his favour, the tenants continue to pay the rates for which he is rated as immediate lessor. The Poor Relief Commissioners reported that, although it is a fact that in some cases the rent has been reduced by the Land Commissioners in consequence of the arrangement between Lord Sligo and his tenants,

> "still, as rates have a tendency to rise in these years of depression, it is likely that the tenant whose rent was reduced some years ago will bear an undue share of public taxation."

Regarding the third paragraph, applications for relief works have been received from the districts in which Lord Sligo's property is situated, and an inspector of the Local Government Board is at present engaged investigating the alleged distress. With respect to the concluding paragraph, the Land Bill does not provide for these cases. It would require new Poor Law legislation to make provision for the case of tenants holding "in co." under a landlord. Although each of the tenants contributes his quota of rent, the Judges on appeal have decided that these are not separate tenancies valued at £4 or under within the meaning of the Poor Law Acts. It is obvious the matter can only be remedied by an amendment of the Poor Laws.

HOME RULE FOR SCOTLAND.

Dr. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will consider the expediency of devoting a fair share of Parliamentary time this Session to Scottish legislation; (2) failing this, will he consider the alternative of introducing a measure giving Home Rule to Scotland?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): In answer to the first part of the question, Her Majesty's Government will certainly consider the matter, as they desire to carry it out. As to the second part of the question, as I have answered the first part in the affirmative, the alternative is not likely to arise.

Dr. MACGREGOR asked whether Home Rule all round would not be a better cry to go to the country with than the House of Lords.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I can hardly consider that a supplementary question.

MINISTERS AND THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

*Sir S. KING (Hull, Central): I have a question on this paper addressed to the Secretary of State for India as to the grievances of the Indian Staff Corps, but I do not see the right hon. Gentleman present. I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as Leader of the House, whether he will make arrangements for Questions addressed to the Secretary of State for India to be answered.

Mr. J. Morley.

*Mr. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University) said, it would be a convenience if they could be informed when Ministers were to be absent. Members came down to put questions, and it was not too much to ask that they might be informed if it was not convenient to answer. ["Hear, hear," and "Oh."]

Sir W. HARCOURT: I think the hon. Member is a little exacting. I only heard about a half an hour ago that the Secretary for War is disabled. Unfortunately these maladies occur rather suddenly, and I regret to see absentees from the Front Bench opposite. We really have no control in this matter.

*Mr. TALBOT: But a note might be left with the doorkeeper.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I hope the hon. Member and his friends will have a little consideration.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us what business will be taken on Thursday and Friday?

Sir W. HARCOURT: We propose to go on with the Estimates on Thursday, and on Friday we shall propose to go on with some of the smaller Bills.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Are we to have the Local Veto Bill before Easter; and, if so, will the right hon. Gentleman state what day?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I cannot say what day, but certainly before Easter.

*Sir C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): Are we to understand that the Supplementary Estimates will first be finished?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Certainly.

*Sir C. DILKE: I suppose some notice will be given whether it is intended to take the Army or Navy Estimates first?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I do not imagine we can take them this week.

Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): Which will be taken first?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Probably the Army Eestimates will be taken first. We are in this unfortunate condition, that at this moment the Secretary for War and the Secretary for the Navy are both laid up.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES ACT (1893) AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill to amend the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893.

Bill presented accordingly, and read a first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 13th March, and to be printed.—[Bill 159.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CONCILIATION (TRADE DISPUTES).

Order read. — For resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [4th March], "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make Better Provision for the Settlement of Trade Disputes."—(*Mr. Bryce.*)

SIR J. E. GORST (Cambridge University) said, he had no desire to interfere between the House and the Introduction of this Bill, but they might not have another opportunity of discussing it this Session. The Government might, indeed, make some efforts to bring it to the Second Reading, and then relegate it to the massacre of the innocents. This was one of the two great social questions which they had heard so much of inside the House and so little outside. The question of the distress caused by want of employment had been referred to a Select Committee; but the second of the great, pressing, important social questions was the stopping of trade disputes; and it was with the view of putting an end to trade disputes which the President of the Board of Trade had described as being most injurious not only to the welfare of the country, but to the welfare of all the workers in the country that this Bill had been introduced. This was not the first Bill of the kind which the present Government had brought in. There was a Bill in the Session of 1893, and another Bill in the Session of 1894. Those Bills, the right hon. Gentleman would admit, were absolute shams. They were introduced, not with the object of dealing with an important question, but in order that the Government might be able to say in the country that they had brought in a Bill to deal with the question. The outside of the Bill contained a very important and significant title; it was described as "A Bill to deal with Conciliation and the Arbitration of Trade Disputes," but the interior of the Bill was an absolute blank. It contained nothing but powers which were elaborately given by Parliament to the Beard of Trade to do something which the Board of Trade was perfectly capable of doing without any Parliamentary powers at all. What were those Bills brought in for? In order that the Government might be able to say that they had introduced Bills to establish tribunals of arbitration and conciliation to deal with trade disputes, and to enable the Government to tell the people out of doors that those Bills would have become law if it had not been for the obstruction of the Opposition. Even the Prime Minister was not ashamed at Glasgow to say that his Party had introduced a Bill in the House of Commons which, if it had become law, would have stopped the coal strike, and that Bill had not become law because it was obstructed by the Tory Party. But this Bill was one to which the Government had never thought it right to allocate a single hour of Parliamentary time for discussion. It stood on the Notice Paper during the whole Session, but not an hour was given in order to have the Bill read a second time. He admitted that the Bill which the right hon. Gentleman introduced the previous evening was a little better in character, and went a little further, than the Bills of the two preceding Sessions. It was, however, a Bill which, he confessed, was wholly inadequate to deal with this great and very important question. What was that question? The question had always been debated as if in these trade disputes there were two parties only concerned — capital on the one side, and labour on the other. If people were willing to conciliate and to arbitrate, they did not need the interference either of the Board of Trade or of Parliament. There was no difficulty in finding a person to act where both sides were willing to arbitrate, and to come to an agreement. There were voluntary tribunals which had been in existence in this country for a long time, and which were perfectly competent and ready to undertake that duty. The more highly organised Trade Societies, both of employers and employed, had established in many parts of the country permanent standing tribunals, to which, by mutual agreement all their disputes could be referred. In all these disputes, however, there was a third party whose interests were very little considered; that was the public at large. The public suffered by these strikes very much; and it was in the interest of this third party that the Government and Parliament had a right and a duty to intervene. This right to intervene on behalf of the public was now occupying the attention of the people of America; and the general temper prevailing there was that they were not going to stand that state of things much longer. A private war between capital and labour was well enough so long as these two elements were the only sufferers; but in our highly organised industries, where it was impossible for any trade to strike without involving the whole community in suffering and even ruin, it was high time that the public, and the authority of the nation, should be called in to put a stop to these internecine quarrels where the parties were ready to arbitrate or to be consulted. The Government should organise some expression of public authority which might, at least, be entitled to say to persons carrying on a labour war: "You must come before us and tell us what you are fighting about; you must explain to us the position which each of you take; and let us know what are the contentions, on each side, which you say you cannot settle without one of those barbarous labour wars." If a public authority could invoke compulsion of this kind, very often the mistakes on both sides would be rectified if they were brought to conciliation. In the State of Massachusetts there had been for years a State Board of Conciliation and Arbitration, which had succeeded in settling a very great number of cases of dispute during the last three or four years. That being what the people were crying for, what a stone the Government were offering to them in this Bill! It was regarded as of so little importance that the Government thought it sufficient to give 10 minutes at the end of a Sitting for the explanatory speech, though it was a Bill which touched the whole industries of the country. But the tribunals established by the Bill had no power whatever; they were mere dumb dogs scattered over the country, though the Board of Trade was to be intrusted by Parliament with the perfectly novel power of galvanising any one of the bodies mentioned to deal with a particular case. For one particular case and on one particular occasion the Local Government Board was to have the power of galvanising the Conciliation Board into life. It would live to settle that one dispute, calling witnesses and documents, and then it would relapse into the state of suspended animation from which it had been aroused. He did not think that that scheme ought to go to a Grand Committee without being discussed by Parliament. He had no desire to obstruct Bills to promote the conciliation of labour disputes. (*Ministerial cries of* "Oh.") Of course, Gentlemen opposite, with their strong partisan feeling, assumed that he could not be honest in desiring to forward such legislation. To such liberality from hon. Gentlemen opposite he was accustomed. But he believed that it would assist the passing of a measure which might do some good if, before it went to the Grand Commitee, an opportunity were given to discuss in the House itself the great principles involved. He hoped that the Government would spare at least one day for a matter of this transcendent importance. The first great principle was this: Ought such powers as were proposed to be intrusted to the Board of Trade or to the Home Office? He had a strong opinion that the proper Labour Department of the country was the Home Office, which was not only in touch, but in friendly touch, both with the employers and the employed through the Inspectors of factories and workshops and mines. The Inspectors of the Home Office enjoyed a very great deal of confidence and official friendship among both the employers and the employed; and he knew of no official of the Board of Trade who enjoyed a like position in the country. Again, the Board of Trade was notoriously one of the most unpopular departments in the United Kingdom. He did not know that it was the fault of the Board of Trade that its Inspectors had to interfere sometimes in a very arbitrary manner; but in giving powers to deal with such a question as conciliation and arbitration, it would be far better that the powers should be entrusted to the Home Office rather than to the Board of Trade. In the second place he did not believe that it was possible to induce the local authorities to become participators in a sham. If these tribunals of conciliation and arbitration were to have no power, and to be a mere name, the local authorities would never take the trouble to create them. He was sure that many of the great municipalities in the United Kingdom, which had distinguished themselves by their readiness to embark in experimental legislation, would, under a well-considered scheme, be very likely to establish these boards, and would, at any rate, consider the question. But if these boards were not to act unless they were put into motion by the Board of Trade, he should think that the local authorities would refuse to appoint them. Supposing that Manchester established a Board of Arbitration, and a dispute arose in the cotton trade; and supposing that the Board thought it could intervene successfully, and by calling parties and witnesses and documents could arrive at some plan which would conciliate conflicting opinions on both sides, why on earth should such a Board, which knew all about the circumstances, was on the spot and understood the feeling both of employer and employed, have to go to London to ask the leave of a permanent official who knew nothing about Lancashire before it might embark on this most proper experiment? He believed that he was one of the very few people in the House who was really in favour of local self-government. The Departments of the State did not like it. They created local authorities, but they did not trust them. Why would not the Government trust the Local Authorities in this matter? They would not proceed rashly, or upset commerce and industry for the sake of trying rash experiments. If the Local Authority of a great city like Manchester chose to establish a Conciliation and Arbitration Board, in the name of common sense let that Board be given some power, discretion, and authority, instead of being kept in the tutelage of some ignorant person at the Board of Trade. Although this ought not to be made a Party question, it was a question of great importance. The history of the Bills for establishing methods of conciliation and arbitration ought to be a lesson. They had all been a dead letter, and not one had succeeded in stopping a single trade dispute. A day should be given by the Government, and the principles on which the Bill should proceed ought to be determined by debate in the House. Then, if the details were sent to the Grand Committee, a measure might be framed of real practical utility. He knew that there was a strong temptation to make political capital out of the question; but if the right hon. Gentleman would trust the House he would find that there was every disposition and desire to assist the Government to pass a Bill which was not a sham, and which would help in putting an end to labour disputes.

*Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, that the Bill had not yet been circulated, and that it could be better discussed on the Second Reading, when its provisions had been examined. The difficulties of trade conciliation were very great, but there was a unanimous feeling in the country that something should be done. The great difficulty was to know what powers were to be put into the hands of any council, whether local or Imperial. It was not possible to dictate to any workman what wages he should receive, or to any employer what wages he should pay. What was wanted was some tribunal, quick in action, with the power of examining witnesses and making a report. There was nothing which terminated a strike so quickly as public opinion. If evidence could be at once taken as to the rights and wrongs and general bearing of strikes by a tribunal which would influence public opinion, then probably strikes would be brought to a much earlier close. The impossibility was to make a man receive wages he was unwilling to receive, and another man to pay wages at a rate he could not afford Still there was usually a meeting point for the parties where a settlement could be hoped for, and trade would get into working order again. His right hon. Friend (Sir John Gorst) had suggested that the Government tribunal should be the Home Office, but there was nothing to prevent his moving an amendment in Committee for the substitution of the words "Home Office" for "Board of

Trade." In such matters it was very much a question of personnel, and that Department became most popular which had an able and popular Head. He was most anxious to see the Bill before suggesting any alterations. He did not suppose his right hon. Friend (Mr. Bryce) looked on the Bill as perfect, and dealing with such difficult and delicate subjects all proposals of the kind must be tentative in character. He could not agree that such Bills were shams, and if thoroughly discussed in Committee the Bill might become of great value, dealing as it did with social questions which were the life and soul of the trade of the country. He hoped that without a long discussion the Bill would be introduced, and would be shaped into a workable measure for the interests of both capital and labour, and of the many thousands who, whilst not immediately responsible for trade disputes, were great sufferers from them.

Mr. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) said, that in a great part of the country this would be considered the most important Bill of the Session, and he trusted it would prove acceptable to those interested. There was no reason to depreciate this short preliminary discussion; but when the Second Reading stage was reached, he hoped and trusted, with some confidence, the Bill would be approached in a less controversial spirit than had been displayed by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir John Gorst). It was easy to describe previous attempts at Legislation in this direction as shams to catch votes, but such was not the spirit in which a social question that required the co-operation of either side should be approached. It was a subject of extreme difficulty, and if it was approached by all Parties in the House, as he believed it would be, with a desire to assist the Government to cope with these difficulties, then those difficulties would be overcome. Both in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman and in that of the hon. Baronet, there was criticism with which he was rather disposed to concur. There are at present a large number of so-called Boards of Conciliation in existence, and they fulfil most useful functions. They might be described as representing capital and labour, masters and men coming together generally in equal numbers, and usually with a neutral chairman, their object being to come to agreement on a disputed matter. But that was not a Board which could give an authoritative decision. If the Members of the Board could agree, well and good, but if they could not agree, there was no decision in the matter. He would like to see in the Bill a more distinct recognition of some tribunal that would be in a position to give a decision which would carry with it more or less weight, according to the composition of the tribunal and the reasons publicly given for the decision. In this respect the right hon. Gentleman opposite had scarcely done justice to the Bill. As he understood, it was intended that the Board of Trade should step in with authority, but more than that was required. If the existing Boards of Conciliation were such as he had described, and if some body was to have the power of authoritative decision, then the principles of appeal and review should be clearly recognised in the Bill, and should be one of its leading features. Such appeal might lie to such Boards as the President of the Board of Trade referred to, and upon which he said a good deal. The power of summoning witnesses, of taking evidence, and getting all the information required, should be with the appellate authority without application to the Board of Trade. Would the Boards have any legal powers? Examples had been cited, and in New Zealand lately an Act was passed which established a supreme tribunal for the decision of these cases, with very large powers. He agreed that to go that length would be attended with extreme difficulty, but it would be possible to give some powers. In most of the Bills which had dealt with this question there had been a studied reservation made of the question of future wages, and without a formal recommendation submitted to the arbitrators this could not be entered upon. But in nine cases out of ten future wages was the sole question in dispute. Possibly some other labour questions entered into it, but nearly always the question of future wages was concerned, and surely Boards should not be discouraged from entering upon that subject; for any arrangement would cover that ground. These were the only points to which he now desired to call the attention of the House—namely, the necessity of a distinction between a mere meeting of the parties for the purpose of coming to an agreement if they could, and the establishment of public boards with more or less authority who would be able to take into consideration the public interests in the matter, and this was one of the points that made an efficient measure of this kind absolutely necessary.

Mr. G. W. WOLFF (Belfast, E.) said, no class would be affected more by this Bill than employers of labour like himself. His firm had had to face a good many strikes, accompanied with heavy losses to employers and workmen, and therefore he felt an interest in the subject. If he had any faith that such a Bill would put an end to strikes, if it would materially diminish their number or shorten their duration, then the Bill would have his earnest support. It was difficult to speak of a Bill not yet introduced, and he would rather have waited until he had the Bill in his hands before speaking if he were not almost certain the House would never have that opportunity. He remembered the Second Reading of the Pensions Bill being brought on after Twelve o'clock; and when the Bill went to Grand Committee it would be removed from the discussion of many members deeply interested. The Bill he thought, was not likely to come before the House for another discussion. Was there such an intention?

The PRESIDENT of phe BOARD of TRADE (Mr. J. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): Certainly.

Mr. WOLFF: If that is understood, when?

Mr. J. BRYCE: I cannot say more than that I hope to go on with the Bill.

Mr. WOLFF said, there might be the intention, but would opportunity be given for full discussion? He remarked with surprise the absence of many Members who were supposed specially to represent the interests of the working classes. Returning to the Bill, he certainly thought from this explanation that it was an improvement upon the Bill previously introduced, but he doubted if it would effect anything like the result intended. It was proposed to give power to local authorities to elect councils: Who would propose these; and would they represent every trade in a town? No doubt Boards of Arbitration, elected by the workmen and their employers, themselves, had done a great deal of good; but he did not think that any confidence would be felt in Boards appointed by the local authorities. The only thing such a body could do would be to take evidence, and by publishing it affect public opinion in that way. Beyond that he did not think they could go. Beside that, a number of strifes went on between different classes of workmen, and he did not see how a Conciliation Board could deal with those disputes. They would not have the knowledge or the competence to do so. He could only urge most strongly on the right hon. Gentleman that, if he wished his Bill to have a real effect, he would give the House an opportunity of fully discussing it, inasmuch as there were so many Members who did not belong to the Grand Committee.

Mr. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) regretted very much the speech of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. He would not in the slightest degree follow him in those Party recriminations in which he had indulged. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the Bills of last Session and of the Session before as absolute shams, and said that they were simply introduced for the purpose of making political capital. The Government, over and over again, urged the House to send those Bills to the Grand Committee to be dealt with there, and no Committee did its work better than the Grand Committee on Trade in connection with industrial questions. He entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman in one thing, namely, that the House ought to have an opportunity of discussing this Bill, and his right hon. Friend was willing and anxious to give that opportunity. But again and again last Session the time that should have been spent in discussing the Bill was wasted in talking it out. [An hon. Member: "After Twelve o'clock at night."] No, not only after Twelve o'clock at night. This matter was too serious to be made the subject of contention between the two sides of the House. He had watched during the whole of his life the working of the trade of the country, and he never knew a time when the condition of trade was more serious or more worthy the consideration of the House than the present. The late coal strike undoubtedly had a very serious effect in the coal trade, and that effect would be increasingly felt in future years. There was abundance of evidence that it diverted a good deal of export trade into other channels, and it was not easy to get diverted trade back again into its old channels when it had once left. At the present moment there were three or four serious strikes pending in the country, notably one in the shoe trade which would affect 200,000 persons. It was said that nothing could be done by a Bill of this kind to effect conciliation between the respective parties. Twenty years before he came into the House he devoted a great deal of time to this question, and he presided for 11 years as President of a Board of Arbitration. The Bills the right hon. Gentleman opposite had denounced as worthless had been submitted to gentlemen best qualified to judge of them, including Mr. David Dale and Dr. Spence Watson. The latter had made 43 awards in trade disputes, and Mr. Dale had done admirable work in the same direction in the north of England. These gentlemen were all of opinion that it would not be safe to go any further than the Bills produced last year and the year before, It was not an easy thing to give compulsory powers to everybody to say that employers should pay a certain rate of wages or that workmen should work at a certain rate. When an arbitrator had made an award workmen could not be compelled to work on the terms of the award. It was not by such means that conciliation was to be brought about. It could only be brought about by setting up these Conciliation Boards with which, the right hon. Gentleman opposite said, the Board of Trade was anxious to interfere with. That was just exactly what the Board of Trade did not wish to do. The Bill did not authorise the Board to interfere where there was a Board of Arbitaation in existence, but where there was none; and then the object of the Bill was that somebody acquainted with the matter should make a Report and bring the parties together and endeavour to get them to form a board. Conciliation could only be brought about by employers and employed meeting together in friendly conference. He was going himself to Staffordshire that week to arbitrate in a trade dispute, and in that case the parties had applied to the Board of Trade to appoint an arbitrator; and that might be done all over the country. It was not expected that this Bill or any other machinery that could be devised would put an end to trade disputes, but it was to be hoped, if the House put aside all Party feeling in the matter, that they would be minimised. This was a question which affected the prosperity of the country. It was almost a question of humanity, when the women and children who suffered were considered; and if both sides of the House would only consent to make their best efforts to devise such machinery as would enable a competent authority to deal with these disputes, he was quite satisfied that we might in this country enjoy more immunity from them than any other country in the world. No compulsory powers had been given to Boards of Arbitration in America or any other country. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman that there had been lately two Royal Commissions sitting, and both had recommended the adoption of the substance of this measure. He thought it was really wasting the time of the House to discuss the principles of the Bill on its introduction. They ought to be discussed when the Bill was before the House, and then they ought to try to make the Bill a useful and effective measure.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, after a speech lasting for 20 minutes, stated that it was absurd, I suppose he meant in us, to engage in any discussion upon this Bill at this stage. I hope the House will, at all events, allow those who differ from the right hon. Gentleman the liberty he has taken himself. The Bill has been spoken of, no doubt, with a certain amount of contempt by my right hon. Friend opposite; but, after all, if that language is thought to be too strong, hon. Gentlemen who have spoken on this Bill in the country have only themselves to blame. If they had only put forward the Bill as an experiment from which they expected only very small results, or from which, at all events, they only hoped to get some further information and experience on a difficult and important subject, I do not think that any of us would have refused to meet them and work on the same lines. But if they assert that they have brought in a Bill that is going to put an end to strikes, that is going to prevent the misery and suffering caused by strikes to working men, their wives, and families, they are estimating their achievement a great deal too highly. I have no hesitation in saying that the Bill may be not only a sham, but a pernicious sham. Hon. Members on this side of the House seem to agree that this subject is as important as any that could engage the attention of the House, and the hon. Member for Lanarkshire has said that this Bill is, in fact, the most important measure of the Session. Now, do the Government believe that? If they do, why do they not give the Bill a better place? If they really believe that Bills of this kind, dealing with social questions, are of the utmost importance, why do they not put them in the front of their Programme instead of giving precedence to all their controversial and contentious business? In the absence of positive assurance that this Bill will be put down for Second Reading as the First Order of the Day, we are almost bound to treat this occasion as if it were a Debate on the Second Reading. Now, what is the object of this Bill? It is, I suppose, to enable something more to be done than can be done at present. For many years I settled the wages in the coal trade of the Midlands, and the wages for the iron trade, and, therefore, I may claim to know something about the subject. As long as arbitrations were accepted by both sides, and the decisions arrived at were observed, they were most valuable and useful. It is admitted, however, that now they are not universally accepted, and I am afraid that they are less popular than when first introduced. Therefore, if this Bill does not enable more to be done than can be done at present, it will be a farce and a sham. In the shoe strike, which, we are told, is imminent, it will, of course, be open to the parties to establish a tribunal which shall consist of employers and employed, of the chosen representatives of both. But the Bill will not assist matters. Supposing a body were appointed under this Bill by the Leicester Town Council, and called a Board of Arbitration, it would not be in a better position to effect a settlement than a voluntary board. But if you are prepared to give to a Board of Arbitration power to compel attendance and to enforce its decisions, you are going to take a great step. Doubts have been expressed as to the possibility of conferring such powers. I do not say that it is possible, but I may point out that in New South Wales they have an Act of Parliament containing provisions to enable Boards of Arbitration to enforce their decrees. I do not say that there is an absolute power of enforcement, but there is a power of recovering damages, which, in many cases, would be equivalent to a power of enforcement. I am not certain, then, that you might not have Legislation giving this power to Boards of Arbitration in this country, but I am doubtful whether the employers or the working classes are yet prepared for such a stringent arrangement as that, and, therefore, I do not make it a complaint against the Government that they have not introduced a system of that kind. But, then, what remains for them to do? I think they might, at least, establish a Board of Arbitration, so influential, so authoritative, so dignified, that no body of employers or workmen would dare to refuse to submit their case to it. Unless they are prepared to take some steps towards compulsion, that is, in my opinion, the only thing that the Government can do. As yet, however, they have done nothing of the sort. They have given permission to create tribunals which would be less authoritative than those which are already in existence. Their scheme is to create a body *ad hoc* for each dispute, and this body is to be elected by persons whose impartiality may not be beyond dispute. I doubt very much whether the work of establishing judicial tribunals ought to be intrusted to Local Authorities. Let me take the case of Birmingham. There, upon the Town Council, there are about five Unionists to one Home Ruler. Do you suppose that those people in Birmingham who belong to the Home Rule Party would not at times feel a certain amount of doubt as to the absolute judicial impartiality of a tribunal which had been entirely appointed by their opponents? If people suspect the impartiality of those tribunals, they will not take advantage of them. If the Government were not prepared to go further than they have gone, they ought to have left the subject alone. The unfortunate Board of Trade is to have power to invite persons who are engaged in a trade dispute to go to arbitration; but, supposing that they do not want to go to arbitration, can anybody believe that the invitation of the Board of Trade will have much effect? If one party wishes to go to arbitration and the other does not, and says so, is the Board of Trade, on the application of the former, to inform the latter that it has the honour to invite them to accept an arbitration which they have already practically refused? That would put the Board of Trade in a ridiculous position. It must be assumed that the Department, in every case in which application is made by either party, is thereupon to send an official to make an elaborate inquiry into the whole circumstances of the strike and dispute. You will want a perfect army of officials to conduct these preliminary inquiries, and the interference of a Government political Department in questions of this kind is not likely to be very useful. I give the Government credit for having tried in difficult circumstances to do something, but it would have been more frank on their part to have said, "We find we cannot do anything," because no official of the Board of Trade can have advised the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bryce) that any practical result would follow such a proposal as this. But the Government have not had the courage to say that they are powerless, and they have not proposed compulsion or the formation of a tribunal of a sufficiently judicial character. It would be most improper to smuggle this Bill through the House without full discussion. Unless it is very much altered in Committee, I entertain no hope of its having any practical result.

Mr. W. ALLAN (Gateshead) observed that he had had a great deal to do with strikes, and he thought he understood pretty well the sentiments of the working men in this country. There was now a general opinion in favour of conciliation. At this moment, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in Newcastle were promoting the formation of a Conciliation Board. In all the arbitration cases that had come under his notice he had found that the men were distrustful of the Arbitrator, and, as a rule, they considered that his decision was one-sided. Therefore, they preferred Conciliation Boards. The Government were making a huge mistake with this Bill of theirs. The time had come when every trade dispute ought to be settled as a civil case, and when the Government ought to appoint Trade Judges—men whose characters were beyond reproach and whom the men would trust in. These judges ought to go down to the district and hear both sides, namely, the delegates of the men, and those of the employers. They should have power to examine the books of the employers, so as to satisfy themselves whether the profits could stand a rise of wages or a reduction of hours. That was the crux of the matter as regarded distrust on the part of the men. The men said: "Show us your books, and we will tell you whether our demand is right or not." He had never yet seen the men satisfied that they had got a fair rise in their wages, even after a long strike. He would advise the Government not to have a big Bill at all. To bring in men who knew nothing about the trade was to satisfy neither workmen nor employer. He spoke of the unemployed, the men who should settle trade disputes should be two judges who should have power to inquire into the exact conditions of trade profit or otherwise, and then give their decision either for the employer or employed. That was a simple method of settling the whole bother.

Mr. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said, he had had to do with conciliation in trade disputes for over 30 years. He was concerned in the framing of the measure known as Lord St. Leonards' Act in 1867, and even before that time he was connected with an Association to promote conciliation. He had done his best to disseminate the principle among workmen on all occasions. No doubt there had been a great number of inquiries upon this subject; but at the same time things had changed so considerably that the reference of the Bill to a small Select Committee might be a good idea. He did not see that much good was going to come out of sending Board of Trade Representatives perambulating the country. There were men at the Board of Trade in whom he would have confidence—one, for example, was the Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Trade (Mr. Burt), the other was Mr. Burnet of the Labour Department; but they could not expect always to have such men available, and if a great number of disputes were to arise, there were no other men at the Board of Trade to send out. He failed to see that the Board of Trade had not at this moment power to do all that was proposed in the Bill; of course with the single exception of payment for services. There was already in existing Acts the power, to a certain extent, to enforce awards, to call witnesses and documents, and examine books, provided there was a voluntary disposition on the part of the bodies to submit these books to inspection. But something more was needed to give vitality to Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration. Hon. Members seemed to be alarmed at the idea of enforcing an award. But what, after all, did it come to? It simply meant the fulfilment of a contract, and nothing more. Power to enforce awards would have a salutary effect upon the malcontents that existed in almost every trades union, and would greatly strengthen the hands of the board of management or executive council of the society. He asked hon. Members on both sides, whether representing the Labour Party or employers, to endeavour to approach the subject with a sincere desire to smooth the way, in order that conciliation should be more widely employed. The only fear he had was, that by this Legislation they might possibly injure voluntary efforts that were now being made; but his desire was to get rid of Party notions in dealing with this matter, and that the House should endeavour to settle the problem on a basis which would be for the benefit of employers and employed, and the public generally.

The SECRETARY to the BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. T. Burt, Morpeth) remarked, that if he might say so without disrespect, a good many of the criticisms which had been expressed would not have been uttered if hon. Members had known the contents of the Bill, and as to the remainder they pretty effectually answered each other. He knew the deep and long-continued interest which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University had taken in social questions affecting workmen, and with a good many of the sentiments he uttered he entirely agreed; but he thought the right hon. Gentleman, whether consciously or unconsciously, introduced a partisan tone into the Debate and said things which it would have been better to have left unsaid. He concurred with what had been said as to the success which had attended the efforts of the Joint Committees in the north of England. They had settled hundreds of disputes in an amicable way, many of which, but for their intervention, would have ultimately resulted in strikes. But these Committees dealt entirely with local or sectional questions and had no power whatever as to district or general difficulties. He did not concur with his right hon. Friend when he said that when once the parties to a dispute had agreed to go to arbitration they could very easily decide upon an arbitrator or umpire. Undoubtedly the preliminary difficulty was to induce the two sides to go to arbitration; but it would be of enormous advantage to have some power outside to whom they could appeal for assistance in suggesting, or helping the parties to find, an arbitrator. He fully acknowledged that there were other parties than employers and workmen concerned; in fact not unfrequently the chief sufferers were those who had nothing at all to do with originating the dispute and who had no power whatever to bring about a settlement. It had been said that the Bill was not a strong Bill. He did not think it was, but he believed it was as strong as the weight of opinion—especially the opinion of the masters and workmen—would justify. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for West Birmingham, expressed a doubt as to whether the opinion of the employers and employed would go in the direction of a more drastic measure than the Bill which was outlined so well by the President of the Board of Trade the previous night, and he entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman on that point. He fully recognised that the hon. Member for Gateshead had had large experience, and was very competent to give an opinion upon subjects such as this; but still, with every respect for the hon. Member, he was quite sure that as far as the workmen were concerned they were not prepared to go the length the hon. Member had indicated, and he doubted very much whether the employers were. All he would say, was that the Bill was a tentative measure and the Government were prepared to take the opinion of the House of Commons upon it. He quite agreed that there should be an opportunity of discussing the Bill on the Second Reading, though the fact that they had had so many second reading speeches on this stage of the Bill rather diminished the argument in favour of much time being given on the Second Reading. After the Second Reading stage, however, the President of the Board of Trade intended and desired that there should be the fullest discussion in Committee, that Members should bring their opinions and experience to the question, with a full recognition of the enormous importance of the subject and the great interests at stake, and that then the general sense of the Standing Committee should be taken and the subject thoroughly thrashed out. The Government had certainly no desire from any preconceived notions of their own to adhere rigidly to any of the provisions of the Bill that would not bear the fullest discussion. He hoped the House would now consent to the First Reading.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR (Leeds, Central) believed there was no more fair-minded man in the House than the hon. Member for Morpeth, and he congratulated him upon the reasonable statement he had just made. The hon. Member had complained that the right hon. Member for the Cambridge University had in his speech shown, perhaps, too much partisan feeling. He did not think his right hon. Friend had shown any partisan feeling, and he could have wished that other Members of the Government had been as moderate in their statements concerning the Bill of last year, which was practically the same as the present Bill. He did not desire to discuss the merits or the principles of the Bill at this stage, but he should like to make one remark. The hon. Member for Morpeth had suggested that after the discussion that had taken place to-day it would not be necessary to have anything like an extended discussion on the Second Reading. Against that view he desired to protest. He had remained silent up to the present time because he did not wish to state his view on the First Reading of the Bill, but he should be sorry if in consequence of the discussion that had taken place he and other Members who wished to state their views should be debarred from doing so. If the President of the Board of Trade would undertake that the Second Reading of the Bill should be put down as the First Order of the Day on some future date, he thought it would be perfectly reasonable that the discussion should come to an end. He hoped before the discussion closed they should get a pledge from his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade that full and adequate time for discussion would be given on the Second Reading of the Bill. He did not think, however, that that could be secured unless the right hon. Gentleman undertook to put the Bill down as the first Order of the Day.

Sir M. E. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) had not the slightest wish to debate the Bill on the present occasion, because he considered that any observations he desired to offer to the House would come more appropriately on the Second Reading stage, but he wished to second the appeal just made by his hon. Friend. Some Members of the House had taken a great interest in this question, as he had, both as a President of the Board of Trade and as a Member of the Labour Commission, and he, perhaps, might be more inclined to sympathise with the right hon. Gentleman in his views on the matter than his right hon. Friend (Sir J. Gorst) sitting near him. For that very reason he was anxious to express his opinions to the House. The Bill of last Session was brought on half-an-hour before midnight, a few speeches were made upon it, and it never came on again. He did not blame the right hon. Gentleman for this, because he supposed he could not find an opportunity for bringing the measure before them again, but if this was an important Bill, if it was worthy all that had been said of it, surely it ought to be discussed on the Second Reading. And yet they (the Opposition) were blamed in the country by more than one Member of the Government—he thought he might name the Home Secretary as one—for having blocked Legislation on this subject, and prevented a reform which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Ministers, would really have almost put an end to strikes altogether. He thought that was an extremely exaggerated estimate of the possible effects of any Bill of this kind; but if it was worth bringing in at all, it was worth discussion in that House, and he trusted that, before the Debate closed—which he hoped it would do very soon—they might have some statement from the right hon. Gentleman that he would meet what he believed were the general wishes on both sides on this matter, and give them an opportunity of amply debating the Second Reading of the Bill.

Mr. **SETON-KARR** (St. Helens) asked the Government for a pledge that time would be given for the discussion of the Bill on Second Reading, not only by the two Front Benches, but by all the Members representing the various interests concerned. He thought hon. Members on his side of the House might be pardoned if they expressed some incredulity as to the real intentions of the Government on this Bill. He did not desire in a matter of this kind to introduce any Party views; but they knew perfectly well that Bills dealing with the industrial and social interests of Great Britain had, during the past three years, received absolutely no attention at all. This Bill was brought in in an unpretentious way; but when the President of the Board of Trade was asked to give a definite pledge that there should be adequate opportunity for its discussion, he merely said, interrupting the hon. Member for Gateshead, that the Government intended to give some opportunity, but he never said that they were ever going to put it down as the first Order of the Day. This was eminently a Bill for which there should be facilities for adequate discussion; and why could they not have an assurance from the Leader of the House that they should have, not one day—for that was not sufficient — but if necessary two or three days for the discussion of the proposed measure? If he thought that was the only time Members would have for the consideration of the Bill, he certainly would speak at considerable length. But he hoped the Government would pay some attention to the representations made to them, and give a definite pledge that not only one, but two or three days, if necessary, should be given for the discussion of the Bill. He did not believe that in the whole Government programme there was a Bill of such importance, or one which might be so beneficial to the country as the Bill before the House.

*Sir A. K. **ROLLIT** (Islington, S.) said, that while he did not join in the large demand made by the last speaker for time, he shared in the hope that the Government would give adequate opportunity for the discussion of the measure. He believed that so great was the need for a Bill which would do something, no matter how little it might be, that he would heartily support the present measure. The great practical danger in dealing with the subject was not a Bill that would do too little, but a Bill that possibly might do too much. Such was the lesson from the failure of the Acts from 1867 to 1872, with their complex provisions and cumbersome machinery; and he, therefore, hoped that this Bill, which promised to give facilities for the formation of Conciliation Boards, and other powers which the experience of the London Conciliation Board, and himself personally as an Arbitrator, had shown him to be urgently wanted, would receive favourable consideration from all parts of the House.

Mr. G. J. **GOSCHEN** (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, it would greatly assist the business of the Government if a reply were given to the appeal made to them from both sides of the House in regard to the time which would be allowed for the discussion of the Bill on the Second Reading. He was certain the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade would remain no longer silent on the subject; but that he would assure the House, if necessary, after a communication with the Leader of the House, that the opportunity for further discussion, which had been so respectfully asked for, would be given.

Mr. J. **BRYCE** wished the remarks the House had just heard had been made at the beginning, rather than at the end of the discussion. A great deal of valuable time had been spent not very profitably, because many arguments advanced were made in misapprehension or in ignorance of the actual provisions of the Bill. A great many of the observations made would be instructive and useful to him, but still the obvious disadvantage of a First Reading Debate was that a great deal of what was said was really said without any knowledge of the actual provisions of the Bill, and was therefore of no practical value. In reply to the appeal which had been made to him, he could only say that it was impossible for him to give anything in the nature of a positive undertaking, in regard to times and seasons, which seemed to be expected; but he was much impressed by the desire shown that the matter should be fully debated, and it would be no fault of his if the House would not have the opportunity of so doing. It was not possible for him to say more at that stage without consulting with those with whom he acted.

Leave given to introduce the Bill.

Bill brought in by Mr. Bryce and read 1º.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

The House went into Committee on the Supplementary Estimates.

Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID in the Chair.

(In the Committee.)

On the vote for a supplementary sum not exceeding £14,000 for the Houses of Parliament.

MR. T. W. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton), complained of the smallness and discomfort of the reading-room. It appeared to be designed, more or less, on the model of the prisons of Venetian political prisoners, which were so made as to be as hot as possible in summer and as cold as possible in winter. It really only fulfilled the purposes of a kind of enclosed tea-room, where Members were in a sort of glass cage to be inspected by inquisitive and irreverent strangers. He thought there should be a larger selection of literature in the room. Why should not the leading Continental papers be provided, and why should not the papers supplied be arranged properly as to be easily found? This might seem a trivial question to many, but in his opinion it was as important to have a suitable reading-room, as a tea-room, a dining-room, or even a bath-room. In case his right hon. Friend, the First Commissioner of Works, should not have a policy in the matter, he would suggest that the present paraphernalia for tea and muffins in the room should be abolished altogether; that the tea-room should be abolished also, and the two rooms thrown into one. He thought tea a purely unnecessary meal, and most people would be better without it. He begged to move the reduction of the vote by £100.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) hoped the recommendation of the hon. Member would not be acceded to. He, for one, was a teetotaller, and he did not wish to be driven out of the tea-room. At the same time, he thought an improvement of the reading-room desirable. The fault he found with the room most he could not read in it; there was too much talk going on, and he thought that if the First Commissioner of Works gave them a talking-room it would be much better.

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. J. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) said, he was sorry his hon. Friend, the Member for Newton, did not bring his suggestion before the Committee, which sat on the whole question of the Houses of Parliament last year. He was bound, however, to disagree with his hon. Friend. He was sure that hon. Members would protest against any suggestion to deprive them of the tea-room. Of the two rooms he thought the tea-room was more used, and was more valuable as a tea-room than it would be as a reading-room. He thought the proposal of his hon. Friend might be ascribed to the raising of the standard of comfort, brought about by the extensive alterations made during the last Recess; and, if the proposals were persisted in, he did not know how to meet them, because, of course, the space at their disposal was limited. If his hon. Friend wished for a larger and better reading-room he must use his influence with another place to obtain a partial evacuation in order to find space for his requirements. But, so far as the space at their disposal was concerned, there was really no room at present for further enlargement.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, that the newspapers in the reading-room were in such a condition of chaotic confusion, that he generally found it impossible to get the newspaper he wanted. There was nobody there to arrange the papers.

*MR. H. J. GLADSTONE said, there was an attendant whose duty it was to do so, but hon. Members were in the habit of shuffling up the papers.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, the attendant was very casual in his attendance, no doubt because he had other duties to attend to. He thought there ought to be attendants there to relieve each other.

MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham) said, he could not advocate the abolition of the tea-room. He thought the real objection to the present paper-room was that it was a passage-room. The doors opened on both sides of the room, and the windows were draughty. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to set apart another room, without interfering with the tea-room, for this purpose.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) thought it strange that the right hon. Gentleman should say that he had never heard complaints as to the reading-room before.

*MR. H. J. GLADSTONE pointed out that he had said that no complaints had been made to the Committee.

MR. BARTLEY said, it had been a matter of common complaint during the ten years he had been in the House. Hon. Members generally took in the literature in which they were interested themselves, and this room gave them an opportunity of reading their opponents' views, than which there was nothing more educational. He thought they might find a space where 30 or 40 Members might sit in reasonable comfort to read the papers. The arrangement of the papers was very unsatisfactory, but the accommodation was more so, and he thought a room which was so much used should be of proper proportions.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) said, they were all much indebted to the First Commissioner of Works for much that he had done, but he felt bound to say that a great deal yet remained to be done, and he thought it was a great pity that nothing had been done to improve the accommodation of the House itself. It seemed to him an extraordinary thing that Members should have to attend there on special occasions many hours before the House met in order to obtain a seat, and, if they conformed to the strict Standing Order, to remain within the precincts of the House.

*THE CHAIRMAN said, the discussion must be confined to the points before the Committee.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT said that something had been done to improve the accommodation for Members of the Press, but still it might be made very much better than it was at the present time. The interest taken in the Debates of the House by the newspapers throughout the country, and by the public generally, was so great that the accommodation for the members of the Press was far too limited. He thought it was extremely desirable that some arrangement should be made not only to increase the accommodation for provincial papers in the Gallery, but also to improve the accommodation for the journalists who attended the House.

MR. W. CROSFIELD (Lincoln) asked the right hon. Gentleman to make some improvement in the ventilation of the serving room of the tea-room.

MAJOR L. DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield) asked what steps the right hon. Gentleman would take in regard to the provision of a type-writing room?

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, he was extremely doubtful whether there should be a newspaper reading-room, as it very much diminished the attendance in the House. Members were often reading the illustrated papers instead of listening to an interesting debate on hypothec or the Law of Settlement in Scotland. He thought, however, that if they were to have a reading-room they should have one sufficiently large and adequate. He thought that there were still some defects in the kitchen arrangements. The kitchen authorities having been provided with a new serving-room, there was no reason for retaining the old serving-room, which was a block in the middle of a long corridor, intended to be a private corridor. The effect of this was to drive a Member outside the corridor, sometimes with disastrous results, as he might from that cause meet a constituent. There were Members, too, who wished to smoke and write at the same time. and there was inadequate accommodation for them.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Penrith) asked the right hon. Gentleman to use his influence in the proper quarter in order that Members might be provided with the papers they desired to read, especially the French papers. He did not agree with the suggestion that the tea-room should be abolished, but suggested, as it was more necessary to have a good reading-room than a good tea-room, that the present tea-room should be used as the reading-room.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, the traffic in the reading-room was very inconvenient. The dining-rooms were usually empty from four to six o'clock, and he suggested whether tea could not be served in the northern dining-room during those hours.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) said, the suggestion just made was a practical one, and he thought one of the adjoining rooms might be thrown into the tea-room, and further accommodation thus obtained. It was very desirable also that the suggestion of the hon. Member for King's Lynn should be carried out, and the block in the passage prevented. But he rather begrudged the public money spent for the comfort and convenience of hon. Members themselves. They ought to be very careful of spending money in this direction, and he could not help saying that he thought a good deal of the money spent during the last six months might have been better utilised. A proper and complete reading room was one of the first things that should have been provided. They had gone on spending money year after year on tinkering alterations, and yet things were not yet in order. The conditions even of that Chamber itself were not altogether satisfactory. But the point to which he desired to draw the special attention of the Committee, was the fact that not one penny of the £14,000 which had been spent, appeared on the Estimates last Session, nor was its expenditure sanctioned by Parliament. The circumstances might possibly justify the expenditure, but the fact was none the less a great irregularity. It would be impossible to carefully supervise the Estimates on a proper system if such irregularity was permitted. The fact, he was bound to say, was a very bad precedent.

*Mr. H. J. GLADSTONE said, he would remind the hon. Member that the money has been expended on works recommended by the Select Committee, and that last Session the question of carrying out this and other works was discussed time after time in the House. A great deal of pressure, moreover, was brought to bear upon him to carry out the work. The proposal to appoint the Committee was before the House for several weeks certainly, it was mentioned in the discussion in the Estimates, and therefore the whole question was within the knowledge of hon. Members. The Committee was appointed; it was representative of all sections of the House, and they were unanimous in recommending the execution of the work that had been carried out. As to the remarks of the hon. Member for Sheffield about the Press Gallery, he could only say that it was not possible to do more than had been done without making large structural alterations.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: Then make them.

*Mr. H. J. GLADSTONE: The work done had been carried out efficiently and economically, and great credit was due to those who had superintended it. In particular he must mention Mr. Taylor (the Chief Surveyor of the Office of Works), Mr. Price (the Resident Engineer), and Mr. Jones (the Clerk of the Works). The Contractors (Messrs. Holland & Hannen), had carried out their work in a most satisfactory manner. With respect to the tea-room and dining-room, although he thought those matters came more properly under the authority of the Kitchen Committee, he should be glad to gather the general opinion of hon. Members, and confer with the Chairman of the Committee, with a view to see whether anything could be done to meet the suggestions thrown out by the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight, and other hon. Members. Between four and six o'clock the tea-roon certainly did not afford sufficient accommodation, and he did not think it would be advisable to change that room for a smaller one. He agreed with the hon. Member for Lynn Regis that it would be desirable to remove the wine service room if it could be done, but hitherto it had not been found possible to do so. As to the supply of newspapers, he had nothing to do with the selection of the papers, but he would undertake to communicate with the proper authority, and see whether some better arrangement could be made to meet the wishes of the hon. Members. The matter of type-writing accommodation for hon. Members was already under his consideration. He was in communication with a number of persons for the quotation of prices, and he hoped in a week or so to be able to state the result.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE said, the financial point raised by the hon. Member for Preston was a very important one, and he desired to press it further. The Committee, he presumed, must have made its Report towards the end of last Session, and if the First Commissioner had made up his mind about the work, he could have obtained a Vote for the money while Supply was proceeding. The money had been spent during the Recess without the sanction or supervision of the House, and its established practice in financial matters entirely reversed. He called for some answer or explanation from the Government.

MR. HANBURY said, it was all the more necessary to press the point, because it was very important that the House should do its best to check Ministers from spending money without proper authority, and as to which no Estimate has been submitted. This work was not contemplated when Estimates were laid on the Table last Session. It was no answer to say that a Committee recommended the work, for that gave no authority whatever. The report of the Committee was no authority for undertaking the works, and did not free the right hon. Gentleman from the duty of obtaining the sanction of the House. This way of administering the finances of the country ought never to be tolerated. The Committee never considered the question of cost, and it was the duty of the right hon. Gentleman to have brought an estimate before the House last Session.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, it was only fair to his right hon. Friend that he should say a word or two upon this question. Of course, he was obliged to look after the interests of the Treasury, but there were two sides to this question. The hon. Gentleman found fault with the right hon. Gentleman for expending this money without the assent of the House. The Committee reported on the 7th of August; the House adjourned on the 23rd, and, therefore, it would have been quite impossible to have had estimates prepared in that interval. His right hon. Friend laid the matter before the Treasury. The Treasury went carefully into the proposed expenditure, and they gave their consent—for this reason, that it was impossible to carry out these works except during the Recess. Therefore, his right hon. Friend was perfectly justified, having got the assent of the Treasury, in carrying out these works during the Recess. He quite agreed that no large expenditure of money should be carried out without the assent of the House of Commons, but, in this case, it would have been quite impossible to obtain a Vote before the Adjournment.

CAPTAIN G. R. BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) thought the right hon. Gentleman was to be congratulated on having had the boldness to spend this money on a purpose connected with the comfort of Members of the House. It would, he thought, be horribly inconvenient to be deprived of a tea-room of some sort, and he did not think the proposals of the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight, would at all meet the circumstances of the case.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES said, the Secretary to the Treasury had really made the matter much worse. The right hon. Gentleman tried to console them by telling them that the consent of the Treasury was obtained, and he seemed to suggest the monstrous proposition that that was as good as the consent of the House. But that was an entire subversion of the Constitution. This was a matter that should especially have been submitted to the House, because the matter was one which applied to the personal comfort of Members of the House; and they therefore ought to be more chary in going outside the proper rules and practice. With regard to the time available, he would point out that almost the whole of the period between the 7th and the 23rd of August, was occupied in dealing with Estimates, and there was no difficulty in getting them passed because the Government closured nearly every one of them.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, he wished to offer a word of explanation which must be satisfactory to the hon. Member. The sanction of the Treasury was generally much more difficult to obtain than the sanction of the House of Commons.

MR. W. L. JACKSON (Leeds, N.) thought the Secretary to the Treasury was getting into lax habits. The First Commissioner of Works was a little unwise in resting a case of this kind upon the sanction of a Select Committee. If there was one question, when he had the honour of being at the Treasury, about which he was always drilled more than another, it was that no new works should be undertaken by any Department unless the sanction of Parliament to an Estimate had first been obtained. Whether these works were to be described literally as new works might be an open question. They certainly could be described as alterations. He hoped the Treasury would not slacken the rule as regards the desirability of the sanction of the House; otherwise the Treasury would lose all its support and all its control. The House seldom acted as the friend of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was generally more extravagant than the Treasury was disposed to be. At the same time, the Treasury could not without danger, slacken any of its rule. The Treasury was, after all, the only reliable support the country had in matters of expenditure, and they ought to require that its rules were rigidly adhered to no matter what Government might be in power. Work of this kind, however, could only be done during the Recess, and great inconvenience would have been caused if it had been postponed for a year, The question of principle had been most properly raised, and he thought they might rest satisfied with the protest that had been made.

DR. TANNER (Mid Cork) said, that during the time of the late Government, material alterations in the drainage system of the House were carried through, before the money was obtained from Parliament.

MR. JACKSON: I think the hon. Gentleman is wrong. If the principle of the works has been assented to by Parliament by the Estimate presented, then the question stands in a very different position.

DR. TANNER said, that if he found that he was wrong, he would unequivocally withdraw and apologise. He wished to draw the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that the doors of the dining-rooms were altogether too narrow. Then he thought more money might have been spent on the House itself.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

DR. TANNER said he wished to prevent hon. Members going into the Division Lobby and then taking advantage of those means of escape from voting which existed there.

*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) agreed to the principle that no money should be spent by any Department without the sanction of Parliament. But this was an exceptional case. Hon. Members had been pressing his right hon. Friend to carry out some alterations, and he thought they should be obliged to him for what had been done. The largest expenditure had been in connection with the kitchen arrangements, which applied more particularly to the comfort and convenience of the servants than to themselves, and certainly had not been incurred before it was necessary. The hon. Member for King's Lynn had referred to the danger of coming out of one the rooms straight into the Lobby, perhaps only to meet some of his constituents, but there was a greater danger he had to meet—namely a bar, and he begged to ask whether it would not be far the greater safety and convenience of the hon. Member, that it should be removed, or only non-intoxicating drinks supplied from it. There had not yet been time, however, to judge of the real value of the work that had been done; but the greatest difficulty seemed to be that of finding room. A good many rooms were occupied in connection with the House of Lords which might better be devoted to the convenience of Members of this House, but as something was likely to happen to that body in the Autumn, he had no doubt they would have more space at their disposal then.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY thought it a farce that, whilst the Public Accounts Committee should have to make every

Department explain and enter into their accounts, if they spent even a few shillings which were not in accordance with the rule, the right hon. Gentleman should enter into this expenditure without any authority at all. There would have been no difficulty in obtaining the sanction of the House last Session by means of a supplementary Estimate, and he was glad the matter had now been brought before the Committee, because these things ought to be done more in accordance with the rules.

*Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE said that work had been undertaken on behalf of hon. Members. In connection with that work he had made a close inspection of all the arrangements of the House, and could say emphatically that the arrangements and accommodation for the Press, the Police, and for the large staff of servants were of such a character that would not be tolerated by the owner of any private house, while the precincts of the kitchen would have been condemned by any factory inspector of the country. He had but deemed it his duty to alter that state of things.

*Mr. SIDNEY HERBERT (Croydon) thought that, while there might have been some irregularities in regard to this matter, he ought not to let the occasion pass without expressing the thanks of the Kitchen Committee for what the right hon. Gentleman had done for their convenience. There was one point, however, which he wished to call attention to, and that was, that although they had been given more room in the kitchen, yet the heat was something unbearable, the temperature at times being over 100 degrees.

The Committee divided :—Ayes 24; Noes 173.—(Division List, No. 19.)

On the Vote for £7,300 for the Foreign Office,

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) asked what was the cause of this large expenditure for telegrams. Was it recent events in Armenia which had caused this large amount to be spent?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, Northumberland, Berwick) said, it was difficult to state the actual cause, but he might say roughly that the supplementary expenses for telegrams were due to the war proceeding in the East. As far as he was aware affairs in Armenia could not be said to be the cause of this Supplementary Vote being required.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES thought they ought to have details about the stupendous sum. Nearly £35,000 had been spent on telegrams, and it was not sufficient for the Under Secretary to talk of telling them roughly how this arose. He must press the hon. Member to tell them what these telegrams were about. Had any of them connection with Armenia or Siam—with the ordering of a British ship by the French to clear out of the harbour?

Sir E. GREY: No telegrams of that kind were sent.

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: Oh! I beg pardon. The point was how was the money spent? The Under Secretary could tell if he chose how every sovereign was spent.

Mr. T. W. LEGH said, telegrams were necessary, and telegrams from the far East were very expensive. If they attempted to cut them down by leaving out the prepositions and auxiliary verbs there might be mistakes, and possibly the telegram would have to be repeated. He thought it would be unwise economy to insist on these messages being shortened. While telegrams were necessary, he thought instructions might be given that they should be compressed as much as possible under certain conditions. No one could read the telegraph despatches without being struck with the fact that certain representatives found it much easier to compress their messages than others. Perhaps no harm would be done if instructions were issued that telegrams were to be compressed as much as possible where necessary.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY thought they might have a little more information. These Supplementary Estimates gave no information whatever. Generally they had a foot-note showing fairly what the money was for, but they had this item of £7,300 for telegrams without any explanation. Surely the hon. Member might tell them generally how the money was spent. Surely it was remarkable that more than a quarter of the expenditure of the Foreign Office should go in telegrams, and yet no explanation was forthcoming. Were they telegrams to distant places like Siam and Argentina—had they to do with Jabez Balfour, or were they telegrams to nearer places in Europe? He admitted that telegrams from distant places were necessary as post would take too long, but the post might be used to places in Europe. If a large number of telegrams were sent to places in Europe he should object, because there were other means of communication which might very well be utilised. They had the Queen's messengers who go all over Europe, why not use them? He knew it was said that telegrams had to be sent in cypher; why not send letters in cypher? They were entitled to an answer, and the hon. Member did not save time by sitting still on the Treasury Bench.

Sir E. GREY said, he had no wish to refuse to give information. He had answered the question addressed to him and since then three hon. gentlemen had spoken dealing with one or two points. The first was the general policy of keeping down the expenses of telegrams. That is an understood thing by all—that the expense of telegrams was to be kept down as low as possible. Of course whether a telegram was necessary was a matter which must rest with the individual on the spot. He would do his best to give the details asked for by the hon. Member for Preston, but out of such a large number of telegrams it was impossible to do more than give the details in the rough. It was asked whether the excess of those telegrams was due to the communications made in Europe, and the hon. Member indicated that in his opinion it was *prima facie* more unjustifiable to have this excess arising from communications in Europe than with distant places. In the first quarter ending June, 1894, he found that the total expenditure was £3,637 2s. 4d. If hon. Members multiplied that amount by four they would find that it was slightly in excess of the original sum, but nothing like the excess amount they were obliged to ask for during the whole year. Out of the above amount he found that there were telegrams to Pekin and Tokio amounting to £1,716, Bangkok, Rio Janeiro, £536, Mozambique and Zanzibar, £531, Guatemala £58, and other places £1,117. The figures for the December quarter, which was an abnormal quarter, were £5,670, and if the other quarters had been of the same abnormal character, the total expenditure would have been over £20,000. The amount in the abnormal quarter was due to telegrams to Bangkok £416, Rio de Janeiro £297, Guatemala £46, Mozambique and Zanzibar £334. The telegrams in this quarter alone to Pekin and Tokio amounted to £3,001 as against £716 in the first quarter; to all other places the amount was £1,572. The excess therefore, had arisen through communications with distant places, and the enormous amount of the charges to Pekin and Tokio was an excess due to communications rendered necessary by the war between China and Japan.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping), asked whether the charges for telegrams included those sent from this country abroad as well as for those from abroad to this country.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY asked what proportion of these telegrams were sent in cypher, and what was the number of telegrams sent over subsidised lines. Were telegrams sent for the Government over subsidised lines at a reduced cost?

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES wished to know what the "anticipated savings" represented. Were they savings on the whole Vote, or were they "anticipated savings" on this particular additional Foreign Office Vote? How was the saving arrived at?

Sir E. GREY explained that the savings would be in respect of another sub-head as to salaries. The savings owing to salaries had arisen because there had been a great many promotions of persons who had not yet attained to the full salary which they would ultimately receive. The great bulk of the telegrams were sent in cipher. He did not absolutely see them in cipher because their preparation was a perplexing matter; but he was informed with regard to the cost of sending them over certain subsidised lines that a number of telegrams were sent at a reduced cost.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft), pointed out that under Head II. the Estimate was £10,250, while the details of the revised Estimate were £17,550; so that £19,225 had been spent on telegrams. In his judgment this was a curious method of preparing an account.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY said that as far as he could make out, the remarks of his hon. Friend were correct. The revised estimate was practically speaking double the original estimate. The Committee was being asked without further information to vote a sum of £9,000, which formed just a seventh part of the whole cost of the Foreign Office, for those extra telegrams. The fact that the savings were to come out of either votes aggravated in his judgment the position. Although it was true that some of the charges might have been due to the war between China and Japan, he pointed out that the figures of the hon. Baronet did not really account for the whole of the extra cost. He thought that there must be some other explanation of the affair, that the Armenian arrangement must be included in the Vote; and if so this raised the question whether the Committee could fitly discuss the Siamese question also. He asked the ruling of the chair as to whether hon. Members could discuss the Siamese question on the vote?

*The CHAIRMAN: Certainly not.

Sir R. TEMPLE: What is the service provided for relating to Guatemala?

*The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the subject-matter of the telegrams referred to, to be discussed.

Sir R. TEMPLE: What were the telegrams which were dispatched to Guatemala?

*The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Baronet cannot ask that question on the Supplementary Vote.

Sir E. GREY said it would be impossible for him to enter into the details of the telegrams; but inasmuch as the amounts for Guatemala were £41, £46, and £58, the hon. Gentleman would see that the amount was neither large nor important. As to the form of the estimate, he could only say that he believed this form had always been in use, and had been adopted without question. If the form was to be altered, the alteration would presumably have to be extended to other votes. He understood that the amount was for telegrams sent out from home only, and did not include the cost of those sent from abroad.

*Sir F. S. POWELL (Wigan): How far has telephonic communication been made use of by the Government?

*The CHAIRMAN: This Vote applies to telegrams.

Sir R. TEMPLE: How do the "anticipated savings" arise?

Sir E. GREY: Out of salaries on another sub-head.

*The CHAIRMAN: This only applies to telegrams.

Mr. HANBURY: You will recollect there was a discussion in the House——

*The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow any discussion on a ruling given.

Sir E. GREY: I do not think it is possible for us to deal with telephones under this Vote.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES failed to see how any saving could have been effected in salaries, when, according to page 18 of the Votes, more money was asked for salaries.

Sir E. GREY: Those are superannuation allowances.

Mr. HANBURY said, that surely the Treasury could not transfer from one sub-head to another.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: It is not at all irregular. It is more regular than it used to be before. What has been done in altering the form in which the Supplementary Estimates were now framed was done at the suggestion of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER asked whether, if Parliament voted money for one purpose, and the whole of it was not required, the Treasury, without coming to Parliament, could sanction the expenditure of the balance for another purpose.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT replied in the affirmative, if the purpose were similar.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Kent, Thanet) asked, whether it was out of order on a question like telegrams to inquire for what purpose they were sent without discussing the policy involved.

*The CHAIRMAN: As a method of raising the question of policy it would be out of order.

Vote agreed to.

On the Supplementary Vote for £1,500 for the Colonial Office.

Mr. HANBURY asked whether the payment for telegrams sent out to the Colonies included the charges for telegrams in reply? Telegrams to and from

India were charged on the Indian Exchequer most unfairly, and he wanted to know whether the same practice was followed in respect to the Colonies? There ought to be a distinction between India and the Colonies in a matter of the kind.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) replied that with one exception—telegrams to the High Commissioner in South Africa—telegrams to the Colonies were paid for by the Home Government, and telegrams from the Colonies by the different Colonies themselves. He did not know what practice prevailed with regard to India.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES suggested that the Committee should know what kind of telegrams were to be paid for and how any excess arose.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON stated that telegrams of the High Commissioner paid for in England were those relating only to Bechuanaland and Swaziland and other territories under his control. The excess was practically due to the South African telegrams.

Vote agreed to.

On the Board of Trade Vote for £2,500 for the Mercantile Marine Fund (grant in aid).

SIR EDWARD CLARKE said, the Vote was in aid of the expenditure on electrical communication with lighthouses. Nearly three years since the House accepted unanimously a Resolution in favour of establishing electrical communication with the lighthouses of the country, and a Royal Commission was appointed, which had made two Reports upon the matter, and recommended what was looked upon as a limited scheme. The whole sum required had been put at from £200,000 to £300,000. So far only £24,000 had been voted. The safety of seamen and shipping was concerned. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give some assurance that a little more effective progress would be made with this very important public work.

*MR. A. C. MORTON said, that last Autumn, at a certain place on the coast, he found that the telegrams which were sent ashore from the lighthouses giving information as to the position of wrecks, were communicated only to the National Lifeboat Association, by the Coastguard, and were withheld from the Volunteer Lifeboat and others.

*THE CHAIRMAN said, that the Vote had reference only to lighthouses.

*MR. A. C. MORTON said, that to put himself in order he would move a reduction in the Vote of £1,000. It was well understood why the coastguard kept the telegrams from the knowledge of the Volunteer Lifeboats. It was because the first boat to reach the wreck was entitled to the salvage. On some parts of the coast it was difficult to ascertain the position of a wreck, except by information from a lighthouse, and this information ought to be made as widely known as possible. If he could not get a satisfactory answer on this point he should divide the House.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said, that he should be very much concerned to know that such a practice prevailed as the hon. Member had described. It was clearly the object of communication with the lighthouses that every opportunity should be given for saving life, and to conceal the information so received would be very wrong. He had no information on the subject, but he would inquire and give all he could to the hon. Member. As to the point raised by the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth, this sum of £2,500 was really a re-vote of what had been voted in previous years. The works were not begun in time enough to enable the whole sum to be spent within the financial year, and therefore, the surplus had to be refunded to the Treasury. Now the works were being proceeded with, and so the money appeared in the Estimates again. At this distance of time, it was impossible to say what was the cause of delay in the initiation of the work. It might have been that the weather was unfavourable, or that the contracts had to be got out.

*MR. A. C. MORTON said, that he was quite willing to take the assurance of his right hon. Friend that the information should be given to every one who wished to have it.

MR. BRYCE said, that he spoke only for the Board of Trade. He did not know what the Postmaster General would say about the stations which were under his authority.

*MR. A. C. MORTON said, that it was obviously to everybody's interest to get away as many lifeboats and other boats as possible to a wreck. He (Mr. Morton) was anxious to bear testimony to the good work done by the National Lifeboat Association, but all others who were willing to assist in saving life and property should be encouraged to do so. He would ask leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) said, that on June 7th of last year, the right hon. Gentleman, in answer to a question on this subject said :—

> "In the last financial year, £10,000 were placed at the disposal of the Board of Trade for the purpose of effecting electrical communication with light vessels, &c. That money was expended in connecting the Kentish Knock and Goodwin (N. Sand Head), light vessels and the Gunfleet Pile lighthouse with the shore. In the present financial year £11,000 has been similarly placed at the disposal of the Board of Trade, and it is intended to expend this amount in connecting the Haisborough and Shipwash light vessels with the shore, and in laying a vessel to the Taskar Rock lighthouse. I am afraid that the other works recommended by the Royal Commission must wait until the Treasury can place more money at my disposal."

Had these works all been completed? The £10,000 was not as a matter of fact expended in the first year.

MR. BRYCE said, that the Gunfleet light and the Taskar Rock light had been dealt with, and his impression was that the work was practically completed. There were three lights still remaining to be dealt with.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: The Haisborough light?

MR. BRYCE: That has been done. The Fastnet still remains.

MR. HANBURY asked whether this money applied to the northern and Irish lights or only to those under the Trinity Board?

MR. BRYCE said, that the latter was the case.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES asked as a point of Order. This sum of £2,500 was part of a Vote in aid of the Mercantile Marine Fund. Under the Merchant Shipping Act of last year, the Vote in aid of the Mercantile Marine Fund was no longer to be the specific sum of £40,000, but such a sum as would make up the whole balance against the Fund, whatever that balance might be. He wished to know whether, under the changed conditions, it would be in order to discuss the whole of the Mercantile Marine Vote or not?

*The CHAIRMAN: This Vote has nothing to do with the particular Act to which the hon. Member refers. It is a grant-in-aid in respect of lighthouses, and all discussion must be confined to that alone.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES said, that unless he received satisfactory explanations, he must move a reduction of the Vote. He contended that there was an adequate sum already voted for this communication with lightships. The Board of Trade would of course have control over this expenditure. A fortnight ago, when the President was asked whether the Board of Trade had control over the Trinity Board, he replied "None whatever;" but to-day he had said the contrary.

MR. BRYCE: Of course we have control over the spending power.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES continued, that the sum asked for was not required, because £500,000 was received in light dues, and only £437,000 was expended upon lighthouse purposes, whilst £70,000 was spent upon clerks and establishment charges. Let the money obtained for lighthouses be spent upon lighthouses, and then, if more money were needed, let Parliament be asked for it; but this £2,500 ought not to be asked for whilst there was an available surplus from the light dues.

MR. R. W. HANBURY desired to ask what control the Board of Trade would have over the spending of this money, and who were the men who were to be engaged in making these electrical communications? It was impossible that it could be undertaken by the men in the lighthouses, who worked 17 hours a day, for small wages, and practically had no holidays. The House ought to know who it was that was responsible for a state of things that would not be tolerated on any railway nor in private works. If the Board of Trade were not responsible for the expenditure of this money, he failed to see why, for the first time, the House should be asked to make a special grant. If the money was to be added to a general fund administered by Trinity House, why was this vote earmarked and treated separately? In what respect did this sum differ from an ordinary grant in aid of the Mercantile Marine Fund that it should be treated in this special way?

Mr. BRYCE said, this money was not specially voted or earmarked for the first time, but in two preceding years these special grants had been voted. The whole business had arisen out of the recommendations of a Royal Commission, which recommended that electric communications should be established in certain cases; and the Board of Trade had endeavoured to carry out the recommendations. These votes were quite distinct from the Mercantile Marine Fund, the affairs of which were being investigated by a Committee over which the right hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney) presided. It would not be right to enter upon any question concerning that Fund until the Committee had made its Report. This money was voted for a special purpose, and would not be mixed up with the Mercantile Marine Fund. It was not at the general disposal of Trinity House; but it was appropriated for the purposes recommended by the Royal Commission. As regarded the unemployed and the Lighthouses he had every reason to believe that Trinity House and the other Lighthouse Commissioners took care that additional men were provided to do additional work and that they did not ignore the considerations which had been mentioned. The money was spent in the way and upon the general principles that Trinity House, and the other Lighthouse Authorities managed the lighthouses generally. Contracts were made by them and were submitted for the approval of the Board of Trade; and the accounts were regularly audited. There was nothing exceptional in this Vote except that the money was given for a special purpose. It was found that the Mercantile Marine Fund was not able to bear the charges that were coming upon it, and, therefore a special grant had to be made. But the whole subject would come under review when the Report of the Committee was presented.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES said, it would have been better that they should not have been asked to vote a sum in aid of the Mercantile Marine Fund seeing that the explanation was, that the Vote had nothing to do with that Fund. He complained, therefore, of the form in which the Estimate was presented. The extra work involved in making the communications would fall upon the men in the lighthouses at the very time that their ordinary work was heaviest.

Mr. HANBURY said, he must press upon the President the giving of a little more attention to this matter, for he was not absolutely free from responsibility for the treatment of the men. There should be a distinct promise from the President of the Board of Trade that the case of these men should be inquired into. There should be a distinct declaration that no extra work should be thrown upon them, and, if it could be shown they were overworked, extra men should be appointed for the relief of their burden.

Mr. BRYCE shared with the hon. Member the feeling that these men were worthy of every consideration. But, he repeated he had no power to interfere with Trinity House, its servants, or property. He would, however, be happy to communicate to Trinity House the hon. Member's observations, and the discussion would, no doubt, draw attention to the subject.

Vote agreed to.

On the vote of £496 for the Local Government Board, Scotland,

Dr. G. B. CLARK (Caithness) asked for an explanation with regard to the anticipated savings appearing in the Estimate amounting to £602.

*The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. Trevelyan, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, that part of the saving was due to the retirement of a first-class clerk, and to the consequent promotions in the offices of the Local Government Board. Every clerk promoted in consequence of the retirement began with the minimum salary attached to his post. In addition to this there was a saving of some £200 under the head of Special Inquiries by the Commissioners of Loans.

Mr. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark) asked what was the salary of the legal and medical members of the new Board?

*Sir G. O. TREVELYAN replied that the salary of each was £1,000.

*Mr. H. T. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrews Burghs) wished to state that the appointment of the gentleman who had been made the legal member of the Board had given very great satisfaction. The right hon. Gentleman would remember that it was stated, when the subject was before the House on a former occasion, that the medical member of the Board was to give his whole time to the work of the Board, while the legal member was only to give such time as was at his disposal. The salaries given to these gentlemen being equal, he wished to know whether there was an equality of service. He did not, of course, impute that the legal member would not give full attention to the duties devolving upon him.

*Sir G. O. TREVELYAN expressed great satisfaction at the hon. Member's approval of the appointment of Mr. Patten MacDougall as legal member of the Board. There was only one opinion as to the merits of that gentleman in all quarters of the House. It had been stated that it was a matter of great importance that the full time of both the medical member and the legal member should be given to that office. They were regarded by the authorities, not only as an eminent legal member and an eminent medical member, but as two responsible administrators. It was quite understood that the full time of the legal member was given to the work of the Board. Mr. MacDougall, eminent as he was as a lawyer, was at heart a thoroughgoing administrator, and he gave no time to private practice.

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) asked whether the desirability of issuing more stringent dairy orders in Scotland had been considered? There had been cases of infectious disease breaking out on the premises of dairymen, and the result had been that customers had suffered in health. He had heard that day of a sad case in Dumfriesshire. Scarlet fever had broken out on a dairyman's premises, and 16 families were now affected by the disease. Did the right hon. Gentleman consider that the Public Health Committees had sufficient power to deal with cases of that kind, and if he thought that they had not sufficient power, would he consider the advisability of issuing a general order which should apply to the whole of Scotland?

*Sir G. O. TREVELYAN said, that the matter had engaged his attention. The case specially referred to by his hon. Friend was a most important case, and the results were sad and pathetic. The law on the subject was extremely doubtful, and the question was what ought to be done in the circumstances. He was most unwilling to make the County Government Bill, which he was introducing, a Public Health Bill as well, but this was such a pressing case that he was sure the Government would not be averse to a special provision being inserted in the Bill, if such was the general wish of hon. Members.

Mr. DALZIEL was much obliged to his right hon. Friend, and added that from what he knew of the feeling of hon. Members, no opposition would be made to the adoption of the suggestion.

*Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: I do not promise it will appear in the original draft of the Bill, but I should be prepared to insert it in Committee.

Dr. CLARK said there had been three Public Health Acts passed for England since they had had one for Scotland. Scotland, indeed, was 50 years behind England in this matter. More people proportionately died in Scotland from preventable disease than was the case in England, and the state of the Public Health Law in Scotland was a disgrace to the House of Commons.

Vote agreed to.

On the Vote of £16,570 for Law Charges, England,

Sir EDWARD CLARKE said, he desired to take the first opportunity of calling attention to the change made in the position of the Law Officers of the Crown by the Treasury Minute of last year. The change was not only an important, but, he thought, a most mischievous one in every regard. It was mischievous to the character of the Bar, injurious to the offices of Attorney General and Solicitor General, and he believed in the long run it would be found seriously injurious to the public service. One immediate effect had been an increase of charge which appeared on the face of the Estimate, and which had been caused by the prohibition of the law officers of the Crown from taking any private practice at all. This change made them political officers, and not the leaders of the Bar. If it were to be permanent, the Attorney General would no longer be the head and recognised leader of the Bar. If he was hardly ever seen in the Courts, and scarcely ever brought into contact with his brethren, he must of necessity lose a position which was obtained not merely from the possession of high office, but by the fact that he had been a leader of the Bar himself. He had always thought there was much to be said for altering the position of the Attorney General. It was a great mischief that there was not in the House one lawyer who sat in the Cabinet, and who in the Cabinet would have to consider the course of public business in the House. Too often the Law Officers in previous Governments had not been consulted in regard to measures, and had been delegated to defend them when actually proposed in the House. That was a position which had its disadvantages, and there was something to be said, therefore, for making the Attorney General a legal member of the Cabinet, sitting in this House. But there was nothing to be said for the present change. At present the law officers received £10,000 and £9,000 respectively. But that was not all. The change which had been made involved the creation of a public office, the Patent Office, upon which some hundreds a year were now spent. The whole of that money was provided before the change by the law officers themselves. Besides that, a grant was made for the clerk of the Attorney General and for the clerk of the Solicitor General. The charge now came to £19,000 for the salaries of the law officers and £700 a year for their clerks, and there must be added to that a sum of at least £800 a year which was now expended upon the Patent Office, making £20,500. This was a larger sum than the income of the Attorney General and Solicitor General came to during the last years of their predecessors in office. Not only had there been this increase of charge, but the Law Officers had to be assisted by other counsel, for whom the House had to provide the means of payment. In the excess vote before the Committee there was an item of £4,000 for agents' costs, counsel's fees, and other expenses in certain prosecutions, and a further item of £11,000 for agents' fees, counsel's fees, and other expenses in a Chancery suit, and he should like to know how much of these items was for counsel's fees. If this were a permanent charge he should challenge the decision of the Committee upon it, but it was not. The change was brought into effect by a Treasury Minute, and the Leader of the Opposition had stated that he looked upon it as nothing more than an arrangement made between the present Government and the present Law Officers. Of course, what the Treasury had done by Minute it could undo, but he could not refrain from making his protest against the change at this the first opportunity. He was sure his hon. and learned Friends who worthily filled the offices of Attorney and Solicitor General would recognise that it was with all friendly feelings he made this statement, but he had a very strong opinion indeed, which was shared by his hon. and learned colleague the Member for the Isle of Wight, and, he believed, by the present Lord Chief Justice of England, against the change which was made, and he desired, with all courtesy and friendliness to the present Law Officers, to make it understood that he looked upon this as a temporary arrangement in which he regretted they were induced to acquiesce.

Mr. CYRIL DODD (Essex, Maldon) regretted excessively the speech which had been made by the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth, because it meant that if at any future time the Conservative Party should happen to be again in Office, then the Law Officers of the Conservative Party would revert to the old practice, which, he thought, was an unfortunate one. The old practice was, that the Law Officers of the Crown were entitled to act for private clients as well as for the Government of the day. There had been cases when the Law Officers were so engrossed in private work that the business of the country was neglected and thrown over time after time. In addition there had been cases where public duty to the country would necessarily conflict with the duty of a Law Officer to private clients. It was because of the difficulty and danger there might possibly be of the Attorney General or Solicitor General using his influence and position for private clients that it was thought right to put an end to private practice on the part of the Law Officers. He regretted the suggestion that such a practice was likely to be again revived. With regard to the suggestion that when the Attorney General was engaged in private practice he was in the Courts, and in all the Courts, and more in touch with the Bar, he agreed that that was the case. It was also true that in such circumstances he was more the leader of the Bar. He denied, however, that it was the duty of the Government to pay for or to provide a leader of the Bar. If the Attorney General was not in a position to lead the Bar, then the Bar must provide their own leader. The country desired that the legal Members of the Government should give their whole time to the Government, and have no other interest than that of the Government. One suggestion which had been made by the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth had often occurred to him as deserving consideration. The hon. Member suggested that a legal Member of the Government should also be a Member of the Cabinet. He agreed with that view, seeing that the Law Officers of the Crown had often to advise on important international matters, as well as upon questions concerning domestic and other affairs. His principal object in rising, however, was to enter his protest against any attempt to go back to the old bad system of allowing private practice on the part of the Law Officers of the Crown.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. T. Reid, Dumfries, &c.) recognised the friendly way in which the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth had made his criticisms on this subject. He must say, however, that ever since he had been at the Bar he had entertained the opinion, which had, if possible, been strengthened by his experience as Law Officer, that his hon. and learned Friend was entirely wrong in the view he took of the matter; and he should very much regret if he thought that what he had said represented any settled policy on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite to revert to the old system, which he believed to be most injurious to the public service. With regard to the point of economy, it was an entire delusion to suppose that any additional sum was involved by the Treasury Minute of June 1894. He believed the salaries fixed on that occasion represented the average of the sum of payments which had been made to the Law Officers during the preceding five years antecedent to 1892. In regard to the particular cases mentioned by his hon. and learned Friend was the Cordite case, in regard to which practically the whole expense was undertaken and incurred under the old system. The other related to expenses in the proceedings connected with Mr. Jabez Balfour, who was now in Argentina, and did not in any sense affect the salaries of the Law Officers. His hon. and learned Friend further suggested that Counsel were more frequently instructed now than they used to be under the previous system. He could only say that the Solicitor General and himself had been most scrupulously particular that there should be no ground of complaint in regard to this particular point; and they had accepted every brief and conducted every case in which any single Department had even hinted their desire in this direction, except in one case in which the Queen's Proctor considered it was not a matter in which the Law Officers should intervene. On the question of whether it was in the interest of the public service that the private practice of Law Officers should be discontinued on their taking Office, he did not make the least reflection on their predecessors, who did their work most ably and with a real desire for the public service; but he held that it was incompatible with the duties of the Attorney or Solicitor General that they should appear for private clients in the Courts of Justice. In the first place, they could never say when, unexpectedly, some political complexion would be attached to a case. Those who had studied the history of the country would know that the battles of the Constitution had been largely fought out in the Courts of Law. In the second place, it was conceivable that in a case in which the Attorney General was concerned for a private client perjury might be committed; and would it not be an anomalous position that the person whose duty it was to direct a public prosecution should be the Attorney General of the day who had himself been counsel for one of the parties who might be accused? For himself, he could only say he could not do the work of a Law Officer of the Crown and any more work if he was to do it efficiently. If further work was to be attached to the various numerous and annually-increasing duties of the Law Officers he was perfectly certain it could not be done efficiently and with that moderate degree of leisure which allowed a man, at all events, to think over the opinion or the advice he had to give in matters of enormous importance like those in which the assistance of the Law Officers had to be invoked. He believed that his hon. and learned Friend and himself could not perform more work than they did at the present time unless they sacrificed quality to quantity. With reference to the point as to the position of the Law Officers in relation to the Bar, he should feel it exceedingly if he thought there was any diminution in the authority which was held by the Law Officers in regard to the Bar of England. But he did not believe there was any feeling of the kind. The Law Officers of the Crown were constantly in the Courts of Justice, and were constantly brought into contact with the profession; and he believed the honour and high-standing of the Bar were better served by those who led the Bar, holding conspicuous and prominent positions in the House of Commons, than by anything else they could be. No gentleman was very likely to be appointed a Law Officer of the Crown, who had not risen to a very considerable—indeed, he might say —a great position at the Bar beforehand, and if the Law Officers were able to shew that they held public, which commanded respect in men, they would command the respect of the Bar. He would conclude by repeating that he should regard it as a very deplorable thing in the public interest, if he should persuade himself that his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Plymouth was right in his prophecy.

Sir EDWARD CLARKE: I made no prophecy.

Sir R. T. REID said, he hoped, in any case, his hon. and learned Friend was mistaken in his view, for he should regard it as a very great misfortune if, on the advent of another Government to office, the rule which had been happily made with regard to the Law Officers should be reversed. He was sure his hon. and learned Friend would, on reflection, see that the first thing to look at in the matter was the Public Service; and that the Public Service would best be served by appointing the best and most able men at the Bar, and requiring them to occupy the whole of their attention with the interests of the State.

*Mr. C. J. DARLING (Deptford) said, he thoroughly agreed with the arrangement which required that the Law Officers of the Crown should not serve private interests during the time they hold office. He did not think that any other arrangement was possible in the public interest. He regretted that during years not long gone by, Law Officers had been seen much more frequently engaged in cases on behalf of private clients than in cases on behalf of the Crown. It had been said that if they made the Law Officers depend on their salaries, they would not get the best men for the positions. He thought he could point in the not distant past to more men in the positions than the two present Law Officers—he did not allude to the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth, or any appointment so recent —men who were surprised to find themselves promoted to the offices, and who, notwithstanding the salary, could not resist the temptation to neglect the business of the Crown in order to attend to private clients—he knew the Bar very well, and he could not think that a salary of £10,000 a year would not provide a very adequate barrister to advise the Crown. The same amount provided a Lord Chancellor, and half the amount a Chancellor of the Exchequer. And yet they were asked to believe that for £10,000 a year they would not be able to induce to accept the Office of Attorney General a barrister adequate to advise the Crown as to the rights of the Japanese against the Chinese, although he had got to assist him another barrister at £9,000 a year, whom the hon. and learned Gentleman, the present Attorney General, said he could not easily distinguish from himself, and as to whom it was a mere accident that one was Attorney General and the other Solicitor General. With the last remark he agreed, but he and all at the Bar were glad that an accident had not supplied the House with a Scotch metaphysician, instead of one or other of the present occupants of the Law Offices of the Crown. He could not, for the life of him, see that the business of the Crown had been worse done since the arrangement had been come to, than when it was perfectly notorious that the Attorney General and the Solicitor General were engaged in all the great cases up and down the country and unable to give time to their duties to the Crown. Turning to the Vote itself, he could not compare the Estimates for 1894-95 with the Estimates for 1892-93 without being struck with the fact that they had been largely increased. He should like to know the reason. Item A, Salaries, &c., stood this year at £14,255, and the additional sum required was £4,070, whereas the same item in 1892-93 was £13,000. For criminal prosecutions the amount in 1892-93 was £19,200; the original estimate for 1894-95 was £25,000, and a supplementary sum of £4,000 was now asked for, but they were not told why the additional sum was required. In item C, legal proceedings, other than criminal, the original estimate for 1894–95 was £12,000; the revised estimate was £23,000; whereas in 1892-93 the amount was only £4,000. The intervention of the Queen's Proctor in 1892–93 cost £2,300; this year it cost £6,500; the total in 1892–93 was £39,450; this year, the original estimate was £55,255; and the revised estimate was £76,000. Another item that struck him as most extraordinary was, £2,500 for costs in divorce cases in which the Queen's Proctor had unsuccessfully intervened. To a Law Officer, like the Queen's Proctor, that was a very discreditable matter. He thought the Committee should have some little explanation as to what those cases were, and as to how it came to pass that the Queen's Proctor had been condemned in those unsuccessful interventions. He was, of course, aware that there was an immense amount of perjury in the Divorce Court. He knew there were many people who thought it a point of honour to commit perjury in the Divorce Court. At all events, it was committed in the Court by an enormous proportion of co-respondents; and the county did not seem to think the worse of them. The Queen's Proctor might be wrong now and then, but it was certainly startling that in one Supplementary Estimate it was admitted that he had intervened unsuccessfully to the extent of £2,500.

SIR R. T. REID said, it was not fair to blame the Queen's Proctor, who only intervened upon the direction of the Attorney General.

*MR. DARLING said, he was extremely sorry to hear it. The Attorney General did not seem to have expected so much successful perjury as had been committed, and perhaps he would tell the House what these cases were in which he had advised so unsuccessfully. He made these remarks in no unfriendly spirit to the Law Officers, nor to the offices which they held. He could not help thinking that the Crown was well served by its Law Officers, and that the terms on which they held those offices were the best that could be made.

Vote agreed to.

On the Vote of £7,000 for Miscellaneous Legal Expenses,

*SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff) said, the circumstances in regard to the arrest of the eminent man of science, Dr. Cornelius Herz, were, he thought, most discreditable to us on this side of the water, and very much more discreditable to the French Government. It would not be desirable for him to state the case at full length, because it was a very elaborate and complex one, but the object of his observations was to put an end by some means to the present state of things. The charge upon which Dr. Herz was prosecuted was such that within three years of the alleged offence he could not be prosecuted at all, consequently those who were implicated, in common with Dr. Herz, in the affair in which he at any rate played a secondary part, were free men, walking about Paris and London as they pleased, although many of them were convicted by Courts in

France of the misdemeanours with which they were charged. But Dr. Herz was held under arrest up to this moment, and, so far as he could learn, would be held under arrest until the end of his life. He had been in his bed for more than two years while under the arrest of an English police officer for alleged misdemeanours in France, in spite of the fact that on the very day of the last of the three warrants the President of the French Republic and the Minister of Justice in France declared in a public decree that for no one of the charges alleged against him could he be tried in France. His belief was, that if Dr. Herz had been well enough to have had his case heard at Bow Street, he would have been immediately discharged. There was no need to arrest Dr. Herz under the Extradition Treaty, because he was confined to his bed by dangerous illness and was not a fugitive, the treaty applying only to fugitives from justice. On the very day on which the last of the warrants was served on him the *Journal de la République* published a decree signed by President Carnot and the French Minister of Justice declaring that Dr. Herz could not be tried in France for any of the charges alleged against him. It was the duty of the French Government to have communicated this fact to the British Government, but as far as he knew they had never done so. He held that from the moment that decree was published, Dr. Herz had been improperly kept under arrest. According to the present state of things the man might be kept under arrest for any number of years; until the French Government made the next move in the case the British Government appparently could do nothing. The French Government had asked them to arrest Dr. Herz; they did so, and they still hold him without any prospect of release. He should have thought that the decree issued by the French Government would have been sufficient to induce the British Government to liberate Dr. Herz, but they closed their eyes to the decree because it had not been officially communicated to them. Before July last the Home Secretary received a number of certificates from certain eminent physicians as to the deplorable state of health of Dr. Herz, and Sir William Broadbent was officially sent down to examine him. He did so, and his report to the Home Office fully corroborated the previous certificates, and showed that the man accused was utterly unfit to be removed to London. There was this peculiarity in the matter—that under the Extradition Treaty his case could only be heard by the Bow Street Magistrate in the Bow Street Court, or in some other Court within his jurisdiction. So that this gentleman, who was ready to prove his innocence, was not allowed by his physicians to remove to London, and the law did not permit the magistrate to go to the place where he was lying. The consequence was that he might have to remain under arrest where he was for his whole lifetime, unless he recovered and could come to London, which was very improbable. It could hardly be agreeable to Englishmen to know that a man was being victimised on their soil in this way simply because the law made no proper provision for the case. He had always understood that it was the practice in this country to give to unconvicted persons simply under arrest the benefit of any doubt, or of any misfortune that might occur to them. He had suggested to the Home Secretary a year ago, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, to bring in a small Bill to remedy the defect in the law and to have the case heard; but, unfortunately, the right hon. Gentleman said he was unable to do so. In July last year many protests were made by different persons in regard to the case; and the Government were asked to try and meet the difficulty. The occasion arose for another medical certificate, and a word or two from this certificate would, he thought, satisfy the mind of the Committee as to the state of the invalid. On the 21st of July of this year, Sir Richard Quain, Bart., Sir George Johnson, Dr. T. Lauder Brunton, Dr. William Frazer, and Professor Malcolm McHardy reported in a formal certificate that they had on that day visited and examined Dr. Herz, and found that—

> "he is suffering from grave diseases of his aortic valves and also of the mitral valve, and that the walls of the heart are diseased. This condition of the heart—"

they continued—

> "leads to attacks of angina pectoris, in any one of which death may occur. The attacks are brought on by the slightest movement, such as an attempt to sit up."

They further added—

> "Under these circumstances, we are decidedly of opinion that any attempt to move him would be fraught with the greatest danger to his life. Dr. Herz has long been suffering from diabetes, and from degeneration of his arteries."

The condition of Dr. Herz was reported to the French Government, but such were the political exigencies and excitement of the Chamber of Deputies that, within six days of the issue of that certificate, he was tried on the assumption that he was contumaciously refusing to go to France to be tried, while our Government, the instrument of France for the purpose of holding him under arrest, with the full knowledge that he was incapable of coming even to London, or of travelling at all, or even of sitting up in his bed with safety, remained silent. His contention was that, if at that moment Dr. Herz was being held under arrest in the interest of the French Government, and if the French Government did not consider the British Government a sufficiently good and honest agent for its purpose, the British Government might well have said—

> "In these circumstances, as you do not believe us, as you do not accept these statements of the most important medical men, as you do not accept the statement even of your own medical men, why should we hold this gentleman any longer? You discredit us as your agents, consequently we wash our hands of the case."

He was conscious that a full and satisfactory account of the case could not be given here; but he thought it wrong, feeling a close interest in the subject, to allow this money to be voted for the further indefinite holding under arrest of this unfortunate gentleman, for no other reason than that the French Government were afraid to say to the British Government—

> "We cannot expect you to go any further in this course of irregularity."

He was not making these remarks for any other purpose than to bring the case to the notice of the Committee. He did not make them by way of censure upon the Government, although the Government had frequently said—

> "We cannot go into the question of whether Dr. Herz could be tried in France or not. It is enough for us to know that we have him under arrest here, at the request of the French Government made two years ago."

He could not believe that the House would be content with this. He hoped the Government would take the matter into their serious consideration, and, because he looked to them to exercise more discretion and activity than they had hitherto shown, he wished to make his remarks as moderate as as he could. He hoped the Solicitor General would understand that his speech was not made by way of complaint, but by way of statement. He believed the Members of the Government, individually, would be as willing as anyone to do justice to this unfortunate individual. But the case was peculiar. This gentleman was there because there was no law applicable to the case, and he could only do one thing—he could lie and he could die. That was the only course open to him, unless, as he feared, his brain and mind gave way under the circumstances. Was it right that the British Government should be called upon to go on in this way? When Dr. Herz underwent the ridiculous mock trial, the French Court sentenced him to the fullest term of imprisonment that was possible for the alleged misdemeanour—five years. This gentleman might be in this country during the five years, and if the French Government did not move, if they were afraid of the outcry of a certain section of the Deputies, he might thus fulfil his sentence, and might yet be under arrest a prisoner for the same reason that he would be lying under arrest now. He was not at all unfriendly to France, he had a great many friends in France, some of them among her Ministers; but if the French Government were so timid as to be afraid to do justice in a case like this; if it refused to make any communication with the British Government, then, in his opinion, Dr. Herz ought to be released on the ground of common humanity; or at least a communication ought to be made to the French Government to the effect that the British Government were not satisfied with the present state of things, and that they could not allow it to continue.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir FRANK LOCKWOOD, York) said, his hon. Friend, in addressing the House, had displayed no unfriendly feeling towards the Government of this country, but had spoken rather strongly with regard to the conduct of that of a friendly State. As he understood the case, Dr. Herz was one of the persons charged in connection with what was known as the Panama scandals, and at the time the charges were made he left France, or, at any rate, was not at home when the investigations were made. He came to this country, whereupon a requisition was made for his surrender as a fugitive criminal, and the Secretary of State had no option in the matter. It became his duty, under the treaty existing between this country and France, to signify to a police magistrate that such a request had been made, and to obtain the issue of a warrant for apprehension. That course was followed, and an officer went down to Bournemouth for the purpose of executing the warrant. It was not executed, however, because Dr. Herz was ill in bed. Nor had the warrant been executed up to this time, though an officer was in attendance to put it into force in case he left the house. In that sense Dr. Herz might be said to be under arrest at the present moment. Now his hon. Friend had said that under those circumstances it was the duty of the Home Office to withdraw the warrant, and no doubt it was within the power of the Secretary of State to take such a course, but upon that point he would express no opinion. Another matter alluded to was that many of those persons who were charged at the same time in connection with the Panama case, were now walking about in Paris enjoying themselves, but, to use a common expression, they might be described as having served their time.

*SIR EDWARD REED said they were within the doctrine of prescription, and, on the ground that they had been improperly tried, the High Court ordered their immediate discharge.

SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD said, if that were so, his apologies were due, not to his hon. Friend, but to the persons in question, and he would make them accordingly. The next point was that the President had declared that none of these charges could be tried under the conscription. He had had an opportunity of looking at the proclamation of the President of the French Republic, and, Dr. Herz holding a high position in the Order of the Legion of Honour, that proclamation appeared to have been made for the purpose of depriving him of his position in the Order. He had no doubt the same course would be followed in this country in similar circumstances; and the controlling authority would withhold its judgment until the criminal Court had pronounced a verdict. There would be, no doubt, something in the point if Dr. Herz had been acquitted, or if there had been, as he was reminded by his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Plymouth, a trial on the merits of the case. Then he did not know that his hon. Friend would not have something to say. He had had an opportunity of speaking with the Home Secretary on this matter, and he would be glad, indeed, if he could assist his hon. Friend in making an investigation or representation. But beyond that he could not say more. He did not think there were any grounds for suggesting that the Government had been guilty of any harsh conduct. The position was this. They had been requisitioned by a friendly Power under a treaty which bound them. The Secretary of State, acting on that requisition, made application to the magistrate. A warrant was applied for. The warrant could not be executed owing to this gentleman's condition of health. No unnecessary indignity or inconvenience was inflicted, and it was to be hoped that he would be happily restored to health and the warrant properly served upon him.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE thought that the statement made by his hon. and learned Friend was quite unassailable. No doubt, this gentleman was in the position of one with respect to whom the French Government were entitled to make a requisition, but there was, he thought, a question to be considered. He did not want to discuss the legal aspects of the question. Nor was there any doubt as to the reality of the Gentleman's great sufferings and terrible condition, because that had been investigated by the highest authority. All were agreed that he had been for two years in the custody of an English police officer, who was in the next room. He did think that this was a case, not for the Home Office, but the Foreign Office, which should make some representation to the French Government as to the undignified position in which this country was placed with regard to the cruel harshness exercised towards Dr. Herz. He hoped the Government would see that some representation might be made to the French Government to put an end to a state of affairs painful to everyone.

*SIR EDWARD REED contended that this gentleman was being held here under arrest on charges for which he could not be tried in France; and, secondly that he was being held here in spite of the fact that the French Government had treated this country with so much inconsideration in alleging practically that they did not believe what was said by our Government and our physicians.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) said they appeared to be placed in an anomalous position in this matter. Here was a gentleman who had now been under arrest for practically two years. From what he understood, the warrant which was issued by Sir John Bridge was issued *ultra vires*. Dr. Herz said, in effect, that if he could bring his case before the police magistrate he should prove that the warrant ought not to have been issued, that it ought to be cancelled, and that he ought not to be extradited to France. That was the position from the fact that this unfortunate gentleman was suffering from a conplication of diseases and unable to leave his room or his bed. He was unable, in fact, in consequence of the state of our law, to bring his case before the Court. It was not the fault of the Government, but the fault of our law; and it was the duty of Parliament so to amend the law as to meet cases of this description. He believed that a simple alteration of the Definition Clause of the Act of 1870 would be adequate. The whole difficulty depended upon this—that in England we did not allow a trial to take place except in the presence of the prisoner, and under the Extradition Act all these cases must de tried in the Bow Street Police Court. But were there no other police courts or other magistrates capable of trying these cases? The Government ought to introduce some exceptional Legislation to deal with an exceptional case, and to such Legislation he did not believe there would be any opposition.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT asked whether all these expenses were borne by the Metropolitan Police Fund and not by the French Government. In the time of the late Lord Aberdare at the Home Office all expenses incurred for the arrest of a prisoner beyond the Metropolitan Police district were borne by the prosecutor, and an indemnity was always required from the prosecutor for extraordinary expense in connection with sending Metropolitan Police officers beyond the district.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, that under the Extradition Treaty with France the cost of the Herz case had to be voted by Parliament. Unfortunately, this country had to pay the expenses in the Herz case under the French Treaty and the expenses in the Jabez Balfour case under the Argentina Treaty. In fact, we were burning the candle at both ends.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT said, he had had experience of many of these cases, and they were never undertaken in his time without seeking an indemnity from the French prosecutor.

EXTRADITION OF JABEZ BALFOUR.

*MR. DARLING called attention to the expenses incurred in the proceedings taken to obtain the extradition of Jabez Balfour, and moved to reduce the vote of £7,000 by £100. He had put several questions to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs as to when the country might expect to see Jabez Balfour. Several of his intimate friends were at this moment placed on their trial, and some regret was felt that Jabez Balfour could not be included among them. He had not been able to get from the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs an exact explanation of what was the position of affairs with regard to the extradition of this gentleman, nor what were the expectations of the Government as to his arrival in this country. Jabez Balfour was a very notorious and important public man; he had exercised a very great influence in the politics of the country; £7,000 had been spent in obtaining his extradition, and still his extradition remained unaccomplished. He wanted an explanation of the way in which the money had been spent, and what the Government had done to obtain the extradition. He gathered from other sources that Mr. Jabez Balfour was in the Argentine Republic, lived there in comfort, and wrote from his home there articles for *The Pall Mall Gazette.* The Government professed to be anxious to secure his return to this country, and what had they done? He understood they had negotiated some sort of special Extradition Treaty. But the Committee should know, and were entitled to know, if they did enter into an Extradition Treaty—a special Extradition Treaty "*ad hoc*," as the Solicitor General would say—what had been the result? Whether there had been a Treaty or not, some one was found, after Mr. Jabez Balfour's extradition had been directed, to bring some sort of collusive action against him. He would like to know who this was, and what the action was brought for? As the result of this collusive action, Mr. Balfour was detained in Argentina. The moment was not propitious for his arrival in this country. What prospect was there of the termination of the action? What were the points raised? What had the Government done to combat those points? And what prospect was there of the Courts of Argentina being influenced by the arguments urged on behalf of the Government? The kind of arguments that would influence the Courts of Argentina should be known to the Law Officers of the Crown. They ought to know from the Government all that the Government knew. If the Committee knew half that the Government knew it would be enough. Would the Government tell them exactly what they had done? If they had entered into a Treaty, what did it provide? If the Treaty had been without effect, how did it become inefficacious? What was the action that delayed Mr. Jabez Balfour's departure? And how was it that, while the Government were asking the Committee to pay for the watching of a man who could not leave his bed or his room, M. Herz, the newspapers stated that the detective put to watch Jabez Balfour had been told to return to England? Was Mr. Jabez Balfour still watched by a detective? Was he under arrest or free? Had this country any rights over him? Until he was satisfied on these points the Government would have difficulty in getting this Vote.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said, he would like to point out to the House that the whole of this extraordinary expense in connection with the tardy action of the Government——

*THE CHAIRMAN (to Mr. Darling): Does the hon. and learned Member move or not?

MR. DARLING: I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said, the whole of the expense incurred in attempting to bring Mr. Jabez Balfour to justice was due to the original neglect of the Government to take action in time. His point was, that there was a period when the Official Receiver's Report was made known to the Law Officers of the Crown; that that Report contained practically the whole case as it was now known against Jabez Balfour; that several weeks were allowed to pass by the Government without anything being done to prevent Jabez Balfour leaving the country. By allowing him to escape, all this expenditure had become necessary. The same extraordinary delay took place in the institution of proceedings against those who were jointly responsible with Jabez Balfour. The proceedings were begun after a delay of 12 months, and only two days before the opening of Parliament—just in time to save the Government from a very serious charge. He made no attack upon the present Attorney General, who was not responsible; but the charge was good against the Government and the previous Law Officers.

SIR EDWARD GREY said that, as far as the Foreign Office was concerned — and their concern extended to the whole of the points traversed by the hon. and learned Member for Deptford—his intention was to conceal nothing from the House of what the Foreign Office knew in this matter. He hoped that the Committee would accept that statement in the spirit in which it was made, and he should like to be confident that the hon. and learned Member for Deptford would accept it also. [MR. DARLING: "Hear, hear!"] He hoped that he was justified in saying that the object of the hon. Member's speech was not to attribute to the Government any want of good faith; because, if it were, the hon. and learned Member could not accept his statement on any point. The hon. and learned Member complained that he had not been able to get any explanation from the Government as to the circumstances of the case. He had given him that explanation in answers to questions, and if those answers had been accepted, some parts of the hon. and learned Member's speech would not have been justified. He was asked in the House originally what the position of affairs was, and he then stated to the House that the Government had applied to the Argentine Government for the extradition of Jabez Balfour, and that legal proceedings were pending in the Republic as to whether, under the Extradition Treaty, Jabez Balfour could be extradited. The request was made directly after Jabez Balfour arrived in that country. Various complicated questions arose under the Treaty. Considerable time and expense were entailed in threshing out those questions in the Courts of the Argentine Republic, but it was eventually decided that, under the Treaty, the extradition ought to take place; and the Federal Government declared themselves prepared to carry it out. But, during this time, Jabez Balfour had been not at Buenos Ayres, but at Salta, a place 2,000 miles distant. The Argentine Republic had a Federal Government, and several Provincial Governments, under one of which Salta happened to be. The Federal Government having decided that they were in duty bound to extradite Jabez Balfour, a further question arose under the Provincial Government. Suits were there brought against Jabez Balfour for offences which he was alleged to have committed since he arrived in Salta — offences of which Her Majesty's Government could have no knowledge, but which, the Argentine Authorities said, must be decided in the Argentine Courts. That was all that the Foreign Office knew, and all that they could know. They could not possibly try or go into the details or actions brought for offences committed long after leaving this country, on Argentine soil, and in circumstances of which they knew nothing. But Her Majesty's Government did press their demand that, as it had been decided that Jabez Balfour should be extradited, the extradition should be proceeded with. The answer given to the British Government was that, under the Treaty they had signed with the Argentine Government—and by the general Law of Nations it was an established practice—a prisoner whose extradition was demanded should first be called upon to satisfy the Law Courts of the country in which he was, for offences committed in that country. On that point also, appeal was made to the Argentine Courts, and the Courts decided that, under the Treaty, they were entitled, first of all, to try Jabez Balfour, and to see that he paid the penalty for offences committed in that country before he was extradited. This was what was stated in answer to the hon. Member for Deptford the other day. The Provincial Authorities of the Province in which Salta is decided that they must try him on the charge brought against him in that Province, and he told the hon. Member the other day that the legal vacation in that Province ended about the end of last month, and at the close of the vacation the prosecution was to be proceeded with. The result of this prosecution was not yet known; but meanwhile we had contended that under the Treaty the Federal Government ought to extradite Jabez Balfour, and we had done our best to secure that the extradition should take place immediately; but the Provincial Authorities put forward their claim to try their case first. There was one further point, and it was whether there was any flaw in the Extradition Treaty which the present Government might have avoided, and by the avoidance of which the extradition might have been expedited. He had pointed out that the Government had done everything they could to enforce the provisions of the Treaty which exists; the only remaining point was, whether they were in any way to blame for the fact that it did not contain provisions as stringent as it might have done. The hon. Member for Deptford talked about a special Extradition Treaty, passed with special reference to this case, *ad hoc* being the phrase he used. When Jabez Balfour arrived in the Argentine Republic there was no Extradition Treaty between it and this country. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member for Deptford said "Hear, hear!" Why was there not? An Extradition Treaty between us had been drawn up and signed, not by the present Government, but by the late Government—he was not quite certain about the date, but he thought it was in 1888; anyhow, it was signed one or two years before the late Government left office. The present Government came into office and found it signed. The late Government were undoubtedly anxious, and rightly anxious, that an Extradition Treaty should exist between the Argentine Republic and this country, and they had got it signed; but they did not succeed in getting that Treaty ratified by the Argentine Republic. Then arose a case of great interest and notoriety owing to Jabez Balfour having taken up his residence in the Republic. He did not know whether in those circumstances it would be supposed it would have been more easy for the present Government than it had been for the late Government to have secured a rapid ratification of the Extradition Treaty. It was, however, the fact that the present Government, within a comparatively short time of its coming into office, did find itself in a position to exchange the ratifications of that Treaty which had been signed by the previous Government. The present Government, finding themselves without an Extradition Treaty, and finding themselves face to face with the fact that an Extradition Treaty had been signed, but had not been ratified by the Argentine Legislature, spared no expense and no trouble to get Jabez Balfour extradited under that Treaty. Immediately it was ratified the point was raised whether its action was retrospective or not, because it was not ratified till after Jabez Balfour arrived in the Argentine Republic. That was a very serious and novel point. It was decided that, although the Treaty was not ratified until after Balfour's arrival, it did apply to his case, and since then his extradition had been pressed for. There was no reason to presume that if the prosecution of Jabez Balfour in the Provincial Court resulted in a conviction he would not undergo the proper punishment for his offence; still less was there any reason to suppose that, if the prosecution failed, the Federal Government would not at once act up to the spirit of its own declaration, and proceed—as it had already endeavoured to proceed, and but for these prosecutions in the Provincial Courts would have proceeded—at once with the extradition of Jabez Balfour.

Mr. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.) said, he was sorry there should be in the minds of any Members of the Government the slightest suspicion of a desire to attribute to Her Majesty's Government a want of good faith; but he was bound to say he did not think the imperfect statement just made had very much improved the case. Until the hon. Baronet rose he was certainly under the impression, which he shared with other Members, that, for this expenditure of £7,000, at least an Extradition Treaty had been obtained; but now the Committee had been told that the Treaty existed before the Government came into Office.

Sir E. GREY: No; I expressly stated that the Extradition Treaty had not come into force.

Mr. COHEN said, he was coming to that. The Treaty was signed before the Government came into Office, and all that had been secured by the zealous efforts of the Government was a ratification of this celebrated Treaty, and as the result we were no better off than we were before the ratification, when we had not incurred this expenditure. It would have been interesting had the Under Secretary informed the Committee what portion of the expenditure had been incurred in connection with Jabez Balfour, and how far the position had been improved by the zealous efforts of the Government. All that was generally known was that a Police Inspector had been sent to the River Plate, the cost of his passage being some £80 or £90, and the ratification of this Extradition Treaty seemed to be the only return for £7,000 now asked for. He did not think the country would grudge £15,000 or more to obtain the presence of this much-sought-for ex-Member who held an office under the Crown, to which he was appointed by Her Majesty's Government before he left the country. The efforts to obtain that presence had turned out abortive, and he thought the country would have been better satisfied had this money been made a contribution to the Liberator Fund, where it would have done more concrete good than in obtaining the ratification of this Treaty, which had not secured nor did it seem likely to secure the extradition of the person for which object the Treaty was ratified. The country would be disappointed with the statement of the hon. Baronet, which showed we were no nearer our object than we were 18 months ago.

Sir E. GREY : I just wish to explain that an Extradition Treaty signed is worth nothing until ratified.

*Mr. W. R. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said, Members could not disguise from themselves that there was a strong feeling out of doors among large sections of the people and not confined to any political Party—that some Members of the House had no sincere desire to see Jabez Balfour return to this country. He expressed no opinion as to the accuracy of this belief, but that the belief did obtain among a large number of people of this country it would be idle to deny. There was a general belief, too, that Her Majesty's Government had not made the efforts they ought to have made to secure the return of the person in question. He did not say that he shared that belief, but the feeling existed and was growing. He had listened attentively to the speech of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and did not think it answered one or two questions in so complete a manner as the Committee had a right to expect. He failed to gather whether Her Majesty's Government had made any effort to ascertain the nature of the charges made against Jabez Balfour at Salta. It was natural to expect this information, and to obtain it was a duty Her Majesty's Government owed to our countrymen, hundreds of thousands of whom had been victimised by this man. Could the Government say who was the prosecutor and was it a collusive or a *bona - fide* action? Another mystery attaching to the matter was, whence came the funds which enabled Jabez Balfour to remain in that part of the world? Thousands of pounds had been expended in efforts to prevent Jabez Balfour from being extradited. He had heard that a large sum of money went out about a year and a half ago, ostensibly for the purpose of some waterworks, said to be in progress in that part of the world. Was the statement true, and if so, where did the money come from? He was surprised that hon Members should laugh at his statements, especially as so many thousands of people had been absolutely ruined by the collapse of the Liberator and the other Companies. He contended that it was the duty of the Government to find out from what source those funds came. It was rumoured that they came from a certain source—— [An hon. Member : "What source?"] He was not going to fall into that trap. There was also a question put by the hon. Member for Sheffield, as to whether there was any desire or intention on the part of the then Government, whether in fact they winked at the escape of Mr. Jabez Balfour? He did not think they did, but the point ought to be cleared up, and he hoped the Under Secretary of State would give more information on that head, so that the suspicion which the hon. Member for Sheffield had voiced should be set at rest and silenced from this date.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT apologised for troubling the Committee again, but he happened to know something of this case, not only from his police experience. but from having been in Argentina, and in a personal capacity seen the Minister there in reference to Mr. Jabez Balfour. Of the charge of £7,000, £600 was due on account of the case of Cornelius Herz; and, on the police regulations bearing thereon, he contended that the French Government should bear the expense as regarded Herz. As regarded Balfour, he thought there had been a great deal too much formality and Government action. No doubt an Extradition Treaty was of no avail until ratified, but the case was perfectly well known in police practice, and he was quite sure the Metropolitan Police would have done everything possible to have effected the arrest of Jabez Balfour, and he did not doubt they had put forward every possible exertion. It was well known that it was often easier to obtain the surrender of a prisoner from a country with which there was no Extradition Treaty than from a country with which such a Treaty had been concluded. The arrest of a prisoner was generally a mere matter of energy and money. He knew that the late President of the Argentine Republic and the Minister of the Interior were most anxious to facilitate the extradition of Jabez Balfour, and the greatest credit was due to Mr. Welby, the First Secretary of the British Legation at Buenos Ayres, and to the Consul-General at Salta, for the efforts which they had made. The Government ought to let the Argentine Republic know that they attached the utmost importance to the speedy surrender of this criminal. If that view was expressed energetically, he believed that there would be very little delay before Jabez Balfour was shipped to this country. He did not understand why such an enormous sum should have been expended in connection with this case, especially as we seemed to be as far away as ever from the time when this infamous fugitive should appear in the dock at Bow Street.

Sir R. T. REID explained that in addition to the expense of sending police officers to Buenos Ayres, very heavy legal expenses had been incurred in that country, where the scale of legal remuneration was, he was informed, more satisfactory than it was here. If, as had been said, suspicions were entertained in connection with this case he trusted they would be duly formulated. The hon. Member behind him had spoken of suspicious sources of money, and he regretted that when he asked what those sources were the hon. Member should have thought that he was laying a trap for him.

***Mr. CREMER** said, that he thought the question was addressed to him from the other side of the House by the hon. and learned Member for Deptford.

Sir R. T. REID said, that the hon. Member's explanation was entirely satisfactory. He could quite understand men and women who had lost very large sums of money through fraudulent companies entertaining suspicions even if they were unreasonable. His view was that the sooner these rumours were translated into plain language the better it would be.

***Mr. CREMER**: I will do as the hon. and learned Member suggests. The general impression out of doors is that the money has come from the Debenture Corporation.

Sir R. T. REID said, that he had never heard that rumour before, and that he had himself no knowledge of the sources from which the money had come, if money had been sent to Jabez Balfour in Argentina in order to assist him to remain abroad. If the hon. Member would bring to his notice any proper ground for instituting criminal proceedings against any one in the United Kingdom in respect of this or any other offence he would see that justice was done. The hon. Member had asked him to explain the nature of the charges at Salta that had delayed the extradition of Jabez Balfour. He believed that they were charges of fraud in conection with some brewery company which was supposed to have been formed by Jabez Balfour in Argentina. It was not in the power of Her Majesty's Government to estimate the importance of those charges. The point was this—in the Extradition Treaty the Government of the Argentine Republic were bound to hand this individual over to the Government of this country, but it had been decided in the provincial Court of Salta, in Argentina, that before handing an individual over to any foreign country he must first have met any such charges that might have been made against him in Argentina, and the Public Prosecutor in Argentina would not forego that. The point was that the Government of this country were not in the least responsible for what had been done in Argentina, and he would further say they knew nothing at all about the question of where the funds came from, but if anyone would give him information on the subject it might be of service and would receive attention. The hon. Member for Sheffield made certain observations with regard to the delay which had taken place in this case, and he was good enough to exempt him from the very sweeping, and he thought unfounded, charges he had made against his predecessors in office. He would much have preferred it if the hon. Member had made these charges when those gentlemen were in the House to meet them.

Sir E. ASHMEAD - BARTLETT (Kent, Thanet): I made precisely the same charges last year, and the hon. Gentleman explained to me that he was not personally responsible for the delay.

SIR R. T. REID said, his observation was that he wished the hon. Gentleman had made those charges in the presence of those to whom he imputed the delay. The person responsible in this matter was not the Solicitor General but the Attorney General, and when the House met last year the Attorney General was Lord Justice Rigby, and his predecessor was the Lord Chief Justice of England. But he, personally, had never had any responsibility whatever in regard to this matter until the month of October last, when he became Attorney General. It would be a very strong thing if any Attorney General had winked at the escape of Jabez Balfour. It really would be, he should imagine, a proper subject for impeachment, and it would be a most shortsighted policy for any man to do anything of the kind. The facts were these. At the time when the prosecution against Hobbs and Wright took place, in December, 1892, there was no evidence before the Public Prosecutor which would warrant any charge being made against Jabez Balfour, and if the hon. Gentleman had only seen the huge mass of papers in the case he would well understand how long a time it took to extricate from its confusion the enormous volume of complicated transactions which were involved. In December, 1892, when Hobbs and Wright were arrested, there was no case whatever to warrant proceedings against Balfour. Immediately on the arrest of Hobbs and Wright, Balfour disappeared from the country. Why was there any delay in endeavouring to bring him back? At first the difficulty was that the Treaty had not been ratified. Then, from that time proceedings had been going forward constantly in the Argentine Republic, and they had been in the hands of the Foreign Office and had been carried on, he had no doubt, with all expedition. It was only in October, 1894, that the final order of the Court of Appeal was made for the extradition of Balfour, and immediately upon that came these proceedings in the Provincial Court, which, it had since been held, precluded the extradition until Balfour had met the charges made against him in that country. As long as it was thought, as it was thought from month to month, that Balfour would be sent to this country, proceedings were postponed, because it was obvious in the interest of public justice, that all these men should be tried together; but immediately it was seen that there would be indeterminate delay in the case of Balfour, proceedings were commenced against the others. As far as he could see, there had been no delay whatever, except such as was deliberately adopted in the hope entertained from month to month that Balfour would be returned to this country for trial. He hoped there would be no suspicion—for it would be a very unworthy suspicion—that there was the slightest desire on the part of any Members of the Government, past or present, to shield from trial the person against whom these charges were made.

MR. T. T. BUCKNILL (Surrey, Epsom), whilst accepting without reserve the statements made by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and others who had spoken for the Government, did not think that those statements had gone far enough, and that they had not got quite so much light on the subject as they ought to have. The facts as stated by the Government were these: That having obtained this extradition order so to speak, from the Federal Government, Jabez Balfour, at the very critical moment, went to Salta, where some charge was preferred against him.

SIR E. GREY: He was at Salta, and the Provincial Government there said they could not give him over to the Federal Authorities until he had satisfied the charges brought against him at Salta.

MR. BUCKNILL said, that being at Salta, he understood Jabez Balfour had committed some offence against the criminal law within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government, and what they wanted to know, and what he thought they had a right to know, was what was the offence against the criminal law with which Balfour was charged, and until he had answered which the authorities at Salta declined to hand him over to the Federal Government. Fraud was a very general term. What they desired to know, and what the Government surely ought to know, was what were the charges of fraud with regard to some alleged brewery business? Salta was not a large place, and this matter could surely have been somewhat better cleared up than it was at the present moment. If the fraud charged related to something which, by some representative out there, could be made known to the Government here, the Government had been very lax in not obtaining more information than they seemed to have got. Then, were they to understand that if Jabez Balfour was acquitted of the charges made against him by the Provincial Government of Salta he would be immediately handed over, without further trouble or expense, to the Federal Government, who would transfer him to the law officers of this country.

Sir E. GREY replied that the Government had never contended or admitted that the offences with which Jabez Balfour was charged before the provincial authorities were entitled to impede his extradition to this country. On the contrary, they had pressed for his extradition in spite of these charges. The central fact, however, was not what the charges were, but that the public prosecutor of the provincial Court had refused to abandon those charges, and the provincial Court had refused to give Balfour up until such charges had been satisfied. That was the central point, and it was one which it was not in the power of the Government to overcome. As to the other question of the hon. and learned Member, if Jabez Balfour were acquitted of the charges, the Federal Government had demanded that he should be given up by the provincial authorities. As far as the Government knew and understood, the only ground upon which the provincial authorities had refused to surrender him to the Federal Authorities was that the charges in their Courts must be first satisfied, and they had every right to assume that if he was acquitted of such charges the provincial authorities would surrender him to the Federal Authorities who were anxious to do the best they could to extradite him under the treaty.

Mr. C. B. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) remarked that the narrative of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs stopped at the most important point. Inspector Tonbridge had now come home, and there could be no earthly doubt that he had told the Government the whole details of the proceedings now pending against Jabez Balfour. What they wanted to know was, were these instituted by the provincial authorities or were they instituted at the instance of a private individual?

Sir E. GREY: At the instance of the public prosecutor of the province.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY: Then was he in custody?

Sir E. GREY: Yes.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY: Was there any engagement that upon his regaining his liberty this country should be entitled to claim his extradition?

The hon. Member was speaking at Twelve o'clock, when the Debate stood adjourned.

The House resumed.

MAGISTRATES AS CHAIRMEN OF DISTRICT COUNCILS.

Address agreed to for Return showing, in each county, the number of Magistrates who have been placed upon the Bench in virtue of their election as Chairmen of District Councils, in accordance with Section 22 of the Local Government Act, 1894.—(*Mr. Loder.*)

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND) (NO. 2) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

And, it being after Midnight, and Objection being taken to further proceeding, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again 6th March.

House adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 6th March 1895.

The House met at a Quarter past Twelve of the Clock.

IMPORT DUTIES ON COTTON MANUFACTURES.

Address moved,—For Copies of Representations made to the Governor of India, in March 1894, against the exclusion of Cotton Manufactures from Import Duties by Chambers of Commerce and other public bodies in India.—*(Mr. J. H. Maden.)*

Motion agreed to.

THE IRISH LAND BILL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (**Mr. J. Morley**, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): Mr. Speaker—I wish to correct a not very important misstatement which slipped through the other night. When I was explaining the Land Bill I stated, in connection with the revival of Section 13, that after the landlord had not objected to the presumption of an agreement to sell, then if he and the tenant could not agree as to the price the Land Commission should fix the price. Well, I used words which conveyed that if, at this final stage, the landlord objected to the price, then the transaction would be at an end. That is not our intention. If the landlord makes no objection after the prescribed time to the Land Commission, deeming an agreement for purchase to have been entered into, it is to be assumed—and it will be found by the Bill that we do assume—that thereby, in case of disagreement as to price between himself and the tenant, he assents to the price being fixed by the Land Commission; in other words, he has one opportunity of objecting to the transaction, not two, as, perhaps. I led the House to suppose.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked when the Bill would be circulated, as it had been promised for Tuesday or Wednesday.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not think I made so definite a promise as that. I believe copies will be accessible at the close of this Sitting; but, at any rate, the Bill will be circulated to-morrow morning.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

THE BURIALS BILL.

***Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS** (Notts, Mansfield) rose to move the Second Reading of the Burials Bill. He said, he was aware that the subject was by no means an attractive one; but two things at least might be said on its behalf. One was, that it was a painfully practical subject; and the other, that it had not been brought before this House for a very considerable period. It was now nearly 20 years since the first of a long series of Burials Bills was introduced, but he was not going to trouble the House with what might be termed the ancient history of the question. It would be sufficient if he took, as a starting point, the passing of the Burial Act of 1880, which marked an entirely new departure in Burial Legislation. It was the result of a bitter struggle, which lasted for 10 Sessions; and, although the Act was passed by the Liberal Government of that day, it was in the hands of his hon. Friend, the Member for East Denbighshire, whose ability and persistency in its previous advocacy made him regret that the chances of the ballot had not committed the present Bill to his charge, rather than to his own. That Act established a principle of great importance, inasmuch as it legalised Nonconformist services in consecrated ground, whether in parochial churchyards or parochial cemeteries. By that means it put an end to the many scandals arising from clerical refusals to bury un-baptized persons in the only places of interment in a parish. It was also a Clergy Relief Act, as well as one for the relief of Nonconformists, because it permitted the Established Clergy to conduct a special form of service in cases where the use of the Church of England service in its entirety was prohibited. It also permitted them to officiate in the unconsecrated parts of cemeteries, and in unconsecrated chapels, though it did not, at the same time, similarly permit Nonconformists to have the use of consecrated mortuary chapels. He should have to refer later on to the practical working of this Act of 1880; but the point to which he now called attention was, that it was both an incomplete and an inconsistent measure. Its great defect was that, while it practically put an end to the distinction between consecrated and unconsecrated ground, it did not at the same time also repeal those provisions of previous Burial Acts, which compelled Burial Boards to divide cemeteries into consecrated and unconsecrated parts and to erect a chapel in each. It, therefore, kept up unnecessary and invidious distinctions, gave Burial Boards vexatious, because needless, trouble, and did not put a stop to the waste of public money caused by the erection of chapels which, in many cases, were superfluous. The Act also left untouched the whole question of burial fees, which, as he should show, were even more unjust now than they were prior to the passing of the Act. All that was pointed out to the Government of that day, and it was distinctly intimated that the measure would be accepted as an instalment only of the Legislation needed, and not as a final and completely satisfactory measure. The Government admitted its deficiencies, and, by way of a solatium to disappointed Nonconformists, intimated through the Lord Chancellor, Lord Selborne, that they would, at no distant day, review all the existing burial statutes with a view to their revision. The no distant day had not, however, arrived at the end of some 14 years, and it was because of that long-deferred hope that the present Bill was submitted to the judgment of the House. He ought, however, to state that both in 1885 and 1886 the Liberal Government of that time brought in a measure resembling the present Bill, but were unable to make any substantial progress with it; and, although a Bill had been brought in in every succeeding Session since, this was the first time that an opportunity had been secured for pressing the subject on the attention of Parliament. The necessity for an alteration of the law had become increasingly urgent during the last few years, and was growing year by year. One reason was, that many of the ancient churchyards no longer contained room for the burial of the dead, and, as a consequence, they were being closed by Orders in Council; so that new burial-places had to be provided. Another reason was to be found in the passing of the Local Government Act of last year. That Act included the Burial Acts among the "Adoptive Acts," which might be adopted by the Parish Councils. As a consequence, new public bodies would now have to encounter all the perplexities and difficulties arising out of those Acts, and if he was not much mistaken they would submit to the anomalies and injustice which they involved with a great deal less patience than the old Burial Boards. If nothing else moved them, they would be impelled by their financial necessities to protest against the wastefulness of the present system; and they would insist that the cost of burials should not be needlessly increased by the erection of unnecessary buildings and the payment of fees for which no service was rendered in return. He had spoken of the future; but a sufficiently strong case for this Bill could be made out by a reference to what had already happened, and was happening almost every week, as a result of opposition to the existing law. There were numerous parishes in which the Burials Question had taken the place of the Anti-Church-Rate Agitation of past times, in the wrangling and the bitterness which it had caused. Burial Board elections turned upon the question: "Shall the required cemetery be consecrated or not; or shall there be one mortuary chapel or two; or shall the parish be burdened, not only with the cost of the cemetery, but with heavy and unearned clerical fees?" Several Burial Boards, sustained by the opinion and the votes of the inhabitants, had firmly refused to comply with the provisions of the law which required them to apply to the Bishop for consecration. But this strange thing had happened, that even a Liberal Home Secretary had felt it to be his duty to apply to the Courts of Law for a mandamus to compel refractory Burial Boards to ask the Bishop of the diocese to perform a religious act, to the legal consequences of which they strongly objected. He need not suggest that this must be most repugnant to the feelings of the right hon. Gentleman now Home Secretary, because he had himself publicly declared that it was peculiarly distasteful to him to take such a question into a Court of Law, and that it was a most invidious position in which to place an officer of the Executive Government. He hoped that the House would not regard this as a mere contest between Nonconformists and Churchmen. If time permitted he could quote the opinions of well-known Churchmen, both clerical and lay, who had expressed precisely the same objections to the existing cemetery system as had been taken by Nonconformists during these painful burial contests. He must, however, refer to the opinions and to the action of some of the Bishops, who had frankly admitted that the passing of the Act of 1880 had effected a change which had modified their previous views, and rendered it necessary to abandon old obligations and restrictions. In a Debate on the Act of 1880, the late Archbishop Tait spoke of a cemetery with two chapels as—

> "a proclamation to the whole world of the differences between the Church and Dissenters, and he should not regret if the instances of that proclamation were not multiplied."

He had also previously suggested that a chapel might be placed for the use of all parties contiguous to, but not upon, consecrated ground. The present Bishop of London, while Bishop of Exeter, referring to the probability of further alterations in the burial laws, said—

> "It would be necessary in providing for the future to do away with the distinction between consecrated and unconsecrated ground. It would not be possible in future to compel the erection in cemeteries of separate chapels for the services of the Church of England. Nor could he say it would be desirable. The very existence of the two chapels in a cemetery was a scandal and a reproach."

The late Bishop Fraser, in consecrating a cemetery at Accrington, said—

> "There is only one thing that gives me pain, and that is when I look round the cemetery and see three chapels standing there, which are so many witnesses that Christian people are not all of one mind; that the distinctions which part them in life are, unhappily, continued after death."

On another occasion, at Royton, the same Bishop said—

> "I do hope the day will come when Churchmen, Nonconformists and Roman Catholics may at last agree to use the same building set apart for the holy purpose of reading a service over the dead."

The late Bishop of Ely, in 1879, equally deprecated the erection of two chapels, and at another conference, expressed the opinion that—

> "in our future cemeteries there should be no division of ground into consecrated and unconsecrated, but that, the whole cemetery having been legally secured in perpetuity for burial purposes, the Church should be content to adopt the principle that the grave, in whatsoever part it may be dug, is sufficiently consecrated by the words of prayer said beside it."

After the Act of 1880 had been passed, the same Bishop made this important statement:—

> "If no part of a public cemetery can henceforth be set apart, consecration has no longer any effect. I might add that a bishop has no *locus standi* for assuming to dedicate by a Church ceremonial what is to be no more for the use of Church people than for Nonconformists, who do not desire, even if they do not dislike, such consecration. An episcopal act solemnly affecting to set apart half a cemetery does but embarrass an otherwise clear position. Viewed in one way it seems to me a fiction—professing to set apart for special uses what can no longer be set apart. Viewed in another way it is an intrusion of Church offices into ground which belongs not to the Church alone, but equally to Nonconformists."

The Bishop of Ely had the courage of his convictions, for, having come to the conclusion that consecration had become a fictitious ceremony, he refused to consecrate any more cemeteries in his diocese. The Bishop of Ely was not the only Bishop who had acted this courageous and consistent part, for the late Archbishop Magee, when Bishop of Peterborough, refused to consecrate several cemeteries. The late Bishop of Lincoln did the same, and, as nobody thought of mandamusing the Bishops, those cemeteries remained unconsecrated to this day. Other Bishops had been willing to conduct a dedication service, instead of a consecration service of the ordinary kind. The present Bishop of St. Albans did so in the case of the cemetery provided at St. Albans, under what was known as Marten's Act, saying, as he did so, that he regarded the ceremony as a peaceful solution of that which was disturbing many minds. The late Bishop of Carlisle also expressed approval of the action of his brother Bishop of St. Albans, and the Bishop of Ripon was willing to follow his example where there was agreement on the subject in the locality. He was aware that the present Archbishop of Canterbury had lately written—

> "I never consent to what is called dedication; it is a mere deception, leading people to suppose that the burial-ground is duly consecrated."

So that what three of his prelatical brethren regarded as a fitting and Christian proceeding, the Primate stigmatised as "mere deception." He had given the opinions of five Bishops of the Church, because he felt sure that they would have weight with Churchmen in this House, and he should be both surprised and disappointed if, when Bishops led the way in the direction of liberality and good sense, the laity of the Church refused to follow their episcopal leaders. The Bishops to whom he had referred had confined their objections to two points—the division of burial-grounds into consecrated and unconsecrated parts, and the erection of two chapels where one would suffice; but they had said nothing in condemnation of the fees which were now exacted for the benefit of the clergy and other Church officials. That was a matter of considerable practical importance, and one to which it was necessary to call the special attention of the House. The theory on which the Burial Acts appeared to have been constructed was, that the parochial cemetery took the place of the churchyard, and, therefore, the same fees which had been payable to the incumbent, the clerk, and the sexton, in connection with burials in the churchyard, were made payable to those functionaries in the consecrated parts of cemeteries now. If those fees were limited to the mere performance of burial services, they would not be seriously objected to; but fees were also payable on the purchase of graves, on the construction of vaults, on the erection of tombstones and railings; and these fees varied from a few shillings to many pounds. A fortnight ago a deputation from the Town Councils of Worcester and Newport, and from other public bodies, waited on the Home Secretary, to protest against the continuance of what they regarded as unjust and vexatious exactions. It was not a Liberationist, or even a Liberal demonstration, for, among the Members of Parliament present were some who sat on the opposite side of the House. The complaint of that deputation would be found in a memorial which, some time ago, was forwarded to the Home Secretary by the Town Council of Worcester, and which had been supported by some other public bodies also. In that memorial, they said:—

> "Your memorialists especially point out the injustice thus occasioned to the ratepayers, who are not only taxed for the support of the cemeteries, but also have to pay an extra tax, in addition to the purchase-money payable to the Burial Board, to the minister for land which he has not helped to acquire. . . . . Your memorialists submit that no justification can be found for continuing the right to receive the fees to which objection is taken in perpetuity by incumbents and ministers who have never received, or been entitled to receive, any fees in respect of burials in the churchyards of their parishes."

Those were only general statements; but a few figures would show that in some cases these fees constituted a serious burden on the ratepayers. Thus the Hampstead vestry complained that the vicar had, during ten years, received on an average above £700 a year from fees in the consecrated part of the cemetery; and, whereas he had received about £9,000, the net loss to the ratepayers on the cemetery had been about £15,000. In the cemetery of Weston-super-Mare it appeared that out of £11,563 received for interments, nearly half had gone to the church officials. But perhaps the most striking facts were contained in a Parliamentary Return which was presented in 1893. It was a Return of fees received by the London clergy in connection with the metropolitan cemeteries in the five years ending September 30th, 1892. During that time the inhabitants of the City of London had to pay £2,632; of Islington, £2,038; of Lambeth, £1,496; of Paddington, £2,889. Brompton Cemetery yielded to the clergy the large sum of £8,092; and for only 717 interments in the metropolitan cemeteries the clergy had received no less than about £27,000, or about £5,400 a year. And for those payments, be it remembered, they rendered no service whatever. It might be said that, whatever ground of objection Churchmen might have to these payments, they did not affect Nonconformists, because they were confined to the consecrated ground. But under the Act of 1880, Nonconformists were now

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buried in consecrated as well as unconsecrated ground, and though they had the services of their own minister, the fee for the service went to the minister who did nothing in return. The injustice of the system did not even end at that point; for several Burial Boards had been in the habit of exacting in the unconsecrated parts of their cemeteries exactly the same fees as were payable to the clergy in the consecrated parts. Last week he addressed a question to the Home Secretary as to four Burial Boards, which had, in that way, flagrantly violated one of the provisions of the Burial Acts, and previous to that he called his attention to the similarly illegal tables of fees of other boards, and he was constantly receiving information of the like kind from other places. The House would hardly believe that, in a few instances, Burial Boards had been in the habit of paying, or, at least, offering, to Dissenting ministers the same fees for grave spaces, for tombstones and such like, as are paid to the Established clergy; their object no doubt being to make burials in unconsecrated ground as expensive as those in consecrated ground, and thereby to prevent a preference being given to the unconsecrated ground. Whatever the motive, he did not hesitate to denounce such exactions as a plundering of the public by the public's own servants; and though the Home Office had interfered to stop these exactions where they had been discovered, it was time that Parliament put an end to a specially odious form of taxation for the benefit of ministers of religion. A Select Committee of this House was appointed in 1882 to inquire into the whole subject of ecclesiastical and mortuary fees, and after collecting a large amount of valuable evidence, offered the following recommendations:—(1) that mortuary fees should be abolished; saving existing rights; (2) that fees should be paid only for service actually rendered; (3) that other ecclesiastical fees should be abolished; and (4) that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners should make up the deficiency in clerical incomes caused by the adoption of such recommendations. He was not proposing changes so extensive as those; for the present Bill did not touch the fees levied in churchyards, but was limited to cemeteries. It was divided into two main parts; the first part dealing only with cemeteries, and the second relating to Nonconformist burials in churchyards. The chief provisions of the Bill, which amended the general law, were to be found in the second, third and fourth clauses. No attempt was made to prohibit the consecration of cemeteries; but the obligation on Burial Boards to obtain consecration was abolished, and they were not to be permitted to distinguish in any way consecrated from unconsecrated ground. Instead, therefore, of allowing only partial consecration, as at present, the Bill would allow of the consecration of the whole of a cemetery by the Church of England, or any other religious body which was willing to defray the expense of consecration. The same principle applied also to the cemetery chapels. This liberty, however, was coupled with an important condition, which might be said to contain the vital principle of the Bill. Consecration was not to confer any right or privilege, or impose any disability, obligation, or liability which would not have attached to such burial ground if the same had remained unconsecrated. Any chapel also, whether consecrated or not, would be available for all persons officiating in the cemetery. By the adoption of this simple but efficacious principle, consecration would become a purely religious ceremony, which would not be followed by objectionable distinctions and restrictions. The religious susceptibilities of churchmen would be consulted, while all parties would be placed on an equal footing in the burial ground for which all had helped to pay, and in which they had a common interest. Another important effect would be to give greater freedom to burial authorities in the laying out of cemeteries and the erection of chapels, while a cause of bitter contention would cease to exist. There was one other provision of the Bill to which he must call attention, because it related to the question of fees, which, as he had said, was the subject of loud complaint. The 9th Clause saved the existing right of the present incumbents to fees in the case of all existing cemeteries, but no similar fees would be paid in the case of future cemeteries, and the fees now paid would cease with the deaths or resignation of the present occupants of office. It might possibly be objected that, although the rights of existing incumbents were preserved, the Church would ultimately suffer loss by the abolition of the clerical fees. To that objection he would reply by asking two questions : Was it fitting that the clergy should to any extent be remunerated by means of a species of death duties—by what were practically taxes levied in connection with the interment of the dead? And would the Established Church be strengthened by indissolubly associating the rite of consecration with exactions which a large portion of the community—Churchmen as well as Dissenters—consider to be peculiarly offensive and unjust? If any hon. Members opposite should think he was proposing a daring innovation, the very novelty of which should be fatal to its success, let him remind them, and remind the House, of a striking event which occurred in the year 1879—the year before his right hon. Friend succeeded in passing his measure. In that year three Conservative Members brought in the Public Health Act 1875, Amendment (Interments) Bill—a measure which had since been popularly known by the shorter title of "Marten's Act." That Bill was supported by the entire Conservative Party ; was passed by the House of Lords, and was even assented to by the Bench of Bishops. It was true that it was a very cumbrous and ill-drawn Act; since it merely tacked together the 345 Clauses of the Public Health Act of 1846 and the Cemeteries Clauses Act of 1847, and made them applicable to cemeteries and to public authorities. But what did the Act do? It gave to Sanitary Authorities almost all the liberty which he was now claiming for Burial Boards. It did indeed provide that, if there be consecrated ground in a cemetery, a chapel shall be built upon it, and a chaplain must be appointed; but then it left it wholly to the local authority to decide whether there shall be any consecration or not. The Act also completely altered the status of the parochial clergy; inasmuch as it gave them no authority whatever, and no claim to any fees whatever. In fact, under Marten's Act, the parochial incumbent disappeared from the scene as completely as though he were disestablished. No wonder that parochial authorities who had discovered the virtues of that Act, had in recent years provided cemeteries under it, instead of what are known as the Burials Acts. Perhaps the most striking fact of recent occurrence was that the Town Council of Oxford had just provided three cemeteries for that city, and not one of them had been consecrated, nor could the Corporation be compelled to have them consecrated. He was aware there were Churchmen in Oxford who regarded this as a grievance; but it was the only course open to the Oxford Town Council to protect the citizens from unjust exactions, and, if Oxford Churchmen would have their grievance redressed, they should support this Bill. He had made this reference to Marten's Act because it answered by anticipation some of the objections which might be offered to the present Bill. Objectors would have to show why the same liberty which it had given to Sanitary Authorities should not be given to Parish Councils or Burial Boards, and also why the inhabitants of all parishes should not have the protection which some parishes already possessed under that Act. The second part of the Bill proposed certain Amendments in the Burial Act of 1880, and this was the most painful part of the case which he had to submit to the House. It would not have been forgotten that, during the agitation which preceded the adoption of that Act, it was confidently predicted that, if any other services than those of the Church of England were permitted in churchyards, the most distressing consequences would follow. They were told that there would be scenes of "foul obscenity" and "ribald atheism"—He was quoting phrases used at the time—and pictures were drawn of Mormon and Shaker and infidel funerals. Even Mr. Matthew Arnold, who was by no means an hysterical person, thought that it was extremely likely that the Act would "vulgarise the English people." He need not say that not one of those portentous prophecies had been fulfilled. The Act had now been in operation for 14 years, and he could not recall a single case in which the liberty granted by the Act had been abused by those for whose benefit it was passed. There had, indeed, been some very painful incidents arising out of the operation of the Act, but they had, he was obliged to say, been caused by clergymen and other parochial officials, who had never been reconciled to the passing of the Act, and had, therefore, done their best and their worst, either to render it inoperative, or to make its operation as disagreeable as possible to the relatives of deceased persons. The result had been that in some parishes the Act had become a dead letter, because the inhabitants had been afraid to exercise the right which it had given them, and then the fewness of Dissenting burials was pointed to, to prove the fewness of Dissenters, or that there was no necessity for passing such an Act. He admitted that a few of the clergy had acted simply under a misapprehension of the actual provisions of the law; either in regard to the required notice, or to the limits of their own powers; and that had been especially the case in regard to the burial of non-parishioners. But the actions of a much larger number could not be excused on any such ground. He could occupy the greater part of that sitting in describing in detail cases which would, he ventured to think, excite both the astonishment and the indignation of the House. He would, however, refrain from doing so, and for this reason. He was honestly desirous of avoiding, as far as possible, the introduction of irritating matter into that day's discussion, and especially he wished to avoid entering into personal controversies. He should, therefore, only describe in general terms the action of those clergymen who had refused loyally to accept the decision of the Legislature; but, if necessary, he could give full particulars to substantiate his statements. In some instances, frivolous or ill-founded objections had been taken to the notices of Nonconformist burials; or the letter of the law had been insisted upon, while its spirit had been disregarded. Very frequently there had been refusals to allow burials in family graves unless the incumbent were allowed to officiate, and that, notwithstanding that payment had been made for such graves. In other cases, the remains of deceased persons had been relegated to some obscure corner of the churchyard, where suicides and disreputable persons were interred; and in one well-known case the grave was dug from north to south instead of from east to west, as usual, and was distinguished from other graves by black posts. Sometimes the payment of fees had been insisted upon before the opening of the grave; or the sexton had refused to fill the grave except on the same condition; both requirements being distinctly illegal. Then the burial of non-parishioners had been refused, unless the parties would forego a Nonconformist burial service. There had also been illegal demands of extra fees, and in one case the incumbent refused to register a Nonconformist burial until compelled to do so by the threat of legal proceedings. Welsh Nonconformists had had a special cause of complaint, arising out of the fact that the clergy had arbitrarily, and of course illegally, endeavoured to exact a fixed fee in lieu of the ancient voluntary offerings at the graveside. The refusal to toll the bell at Nonconformist burials had been very common, though sometimes it had been tolled in consideration of the payment of an extra fee. In a few cases—but a few, he was glad to say—there had been a churlish refusal to allow the use of the parish bier, ropes and planks, and other facilities belonging to the parish. He wished he could stop here, but he had yet to advert to a class of cases of a still worse character. In addition to the petty annoyances which he had thus briefly described, there had been several cases of positive obstruction, or of the most offensive displays of clerical intolerance. Sometimes burial parties had been threatened with a prosecution for brawling, for so harmless a proceeding as the singing of a hymn, or the singing had been peremptorily stopped. Churchyard gates had been locked against funeral parties, which have had to enter by some back way, or specially-provided gate, and even through holes in the churchyard palings, or a gap in the hedge; or else the gates had not been opened until after unreasonable delay. There had even been cases in which clergymen had forced themselves upon the parties, and insisted on officiating. In one instance, both the clergyman and the Nonconformist minister read the service against each other, and in another, the clergyman read the service after that of the Nonconformist had concluded. Where the clergy had not proceeded to such lengths as these, there had been vehement and offensive protests against Nonconformist services in the churchyard; one clergyman actually preaching on the subject on the following Sunday, when he took for his text the passage, "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass"!. He passed by the misconduct of parish clerks and sextons in some cases, as they had simply followed the bad example of their superiors; but he must state that in one case the sexton had the indecency to commence filling the grave while the Nonconformist service was proceeding. He did not say all that might be said upon occurrences so painful and so reprehensible, but he ventured to assert that there was no one in that House, either on that side or the other, who would defend such proceedings, and who would not agree with the poet who had said—

> "Not friends alone such obsequies deplore:
> They make mankind the mourners!"

It was not for him to read lectures to the Established clergy, but he might remind them of the weighty utterance of that eminent ecclesiastical Judge, Sir John Nicholl, in a case of refusing to bury the unbaptised:—

> "It is by a lenient and liberal interpretation of the laws of disability and exclusion, and not by a captious and vexatious application of them, that the true interests and the true dignity of the Church Establishment are best maintained."

He would, in addition, only remind the House that the grievances complained of wounded the feelings of men and of women just when, because of affliction, they were least able to resent injustice or to obtain redress. And for that reason he asked that House to protect those who, from the very necessity of the case, were unable to protect themselves. It was for that purpose that the present Bill proposed, as the second part, certain Amendments in the law of 1880. It did so by shortening the time of notice of a Nonconformist burial service; by extending the hours during which such burials might take place, and by permitting burials on Sundays, Good Friday and Christmas Day. It also authorised the incumbent to dispense with the notice, and in certain cases allowed of burial without the legal notice. It removed all doubt in the case of non-parishioners, by enacting that the provisions of the Act should be applicable as in other cases. Then there was a clause of much greater importance, Clause 13, which embodied the fundamental principle of that part of the Measure. It was as follows:—

> "13.—(1) In the case of burials under the said Act [1880] it shall not be lawful for the incumbent of any parish to subject to any disadvantage the relatives of deceased persons, by refusing permission to bury in available graves in which relatives of the deceased are interred; or by setting apart particular portions of such churchyard for such burials; or by distinguishing in any way from other graves the graves of persons buried in accordance with the provisions of the said Act. (2) It shall not be lawful in the case of burials to prevent the use of the gateways, entries, or paths commonly used in the case of other burials, and any attempt to prevent such use shall be deemed to be an obstruction under the said Act. (3) It shall not be lawful in the case of burials to refuse, or prevent, the tolling of the bell, or the use of any bier, planks, or other appliances commonly used at burials, and the sexton and gravedigger shall discharge such duties as are obligatory on them in the case of other burials."

He did not profess to believe that even that clause would render altogether impossible the recurrence of such incidents as those to which he had referred; but it would be an affirmation by the Legislature of the principle on which the Act of 1880 was based; while it would enable the Courts of Law to restrain to some extent clergymen and other parochial officials from resorting to unworthy expedients, which they could now adopt with absolute impunity. He had to thank the House for its patient listening to a statement which, as he said at the outset, could have no attractions, and which must have caused pain to some of those whom he had addressed. He had endeavoured to state, as clearly and as dispassionately as he could, the circumstances which rendered such a measure as this absolutely necessary, in the interest of social peace, and, he would add, of religion also. He did not ask the House to pass this Bill as part of a plan of campaign against the Church Establishment, but as a practical measure, dealing with a painful and practical evil. Although he had been fighting the battle of religious equality all through his public life, he had always deplored the necessity for fighting it at the graveside and over the coffins of the dead. Episcopalians and Nonconformists would, no doubt, always have their differences during life; but there was surely no need, or excuse, for perpetuating and accentuating them in death. They might rightly struggle with each other on the platform and in the Press, at the polling-booth and in Parliament; but there was one spot on earth where contention and bitterness should have no place—that spot which they all agreed to designate as "The field and acre of our God!" He begged to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

*MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, he was glad to hear that this Bill did not form part of the plan of campaign against the Church, but had the hon. Member not assured them on that point they would hardly have thought it. When the hon. Member was examined before the Committee, he stated that he was connected with a Society known as the Liberation Society, and that he took a special interest in the question of burials. He thought, therefore, that members of the Church of England ought to look closely into a Bill brought in under such auspices. He could not help wishing that this Bill had been brought in on the lines of the speech addressed to the House by the right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. O. Morgan) on the introduction of the Bill of 1880. Then the right hon. Gentleman said that he rose to move the Second Reading of a Bill which he sincerely trusted would close one of the most painful controversies that had ever harassed the mind of that House. He should be sorry to introduce into the discussion of a Bill of this kind anything which savoured of Party spirit or acrimony, but having read the clauses of the Bill it appeared to him that it did not pay due regard to the feelings and the desires of members of the Church of England; and it was on that account that he opposed it. Before dealing with the subject, however, he wished to allude to the first clause, which had not been referred to by the hon. Gentleman. As he understood, its object was to give all burial authorities a power of compulsory purchase for the purpose of erecting new burial-grounds. The hon. Member referred to what was called Marten's Act, but it could only be put in force by the sanitary authorities on grounds of sanitary necessity; and he was glad to hear that the Act had been made operative in certain cases. But he did not understand that there had been any attempt to exercise compulsory powers of purchase, and he thought it might be questioned whether that Act did confer compulsory powers, and the question he wished to put to the promoters of this Bill was—Is there any necessity to give burial boards this unlimited compulsory power? It was a compulsory power which might be used to the great disadvantage of persons residing in particular districts, particularly in the country. A cemetery was not always an agreeable addition to a suburban or rural district, and he urged that it was not desirable to introduce this principle of compulsion except on necessity shown (and no attempt had been made to establish this necessity), or, secondly, except under the strict control of that Department of the Government which was specially associated with burials—namely, the Home Office. The House ought to be put in possession of the opinions of the Home Office on a subject of this kind; and he regretted to note the absence, probably through illness, of the representatives of that Department on the Treasury Bench.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I am perfectly prepared to state the opinion of the Home Office and of the Government on this Bill.

*MR. TOMLINSON proceeded to point out that Clause 2 dealt with the question of distinguishing and marking the boundaries of consecrated and unconsecrated portions of the burial-ground. In his judgment the result of the passing of this clause would be that no one would really know whether those who were buried in a cemetery were buried in consecrated or unconsecrated ground. He did not oppose this clause so much on the ground that it affected the rights of the clergy, as that it was an interference with the rights of the laity of the Church. He appealed to the House whether it was not true to say that a large majority of the people of the country would resent the idea of being compelled to take the bodies of relatives and friends into unconsecrated ground; and, in their interest, he objected to such a provision, especially as the law on the subject at present was really very considerate to the needs and wishes of those who wished to have burial-grounds common. If there was that intense desire on the part of Nonconformists to be buried in unconsecrated ground, though in close proximity to members of the Church in consecrated ground, the present law was fair and reasonable in its attempt to meet their wishes, if any regard was to be paid to the feelings of those who desired to be buried in consecrated ground. Clause 3 also dealt with the subject of consecration, and by the first provision enacted that "it shall not be lawful for a Burial Authority to pay any fees in respect of consecration." In his opinion the curt refusal to allow fees was a hardship which those who desired that some portion of the burial-ground should be consecrated might justly complain of, as he understood these fees were simply payments to enable a proper record to be kept and preserved of the consecration, so that hereafter there should be no dispute as to what had been done. If that were so, he failed to see the necessity of the prohibition of such fees. The second part of the clause was of a sweeping character, providing, as it did, that consecration should confer no right or privilege which would not be attached to such burial-ground if it had remained unconsecrated. The position of consecrated burial-grounds under the present law was a fair and reasonable one, and unless they were prepared to go a step in the direction of Disestablishment, they had a right to ask that the rights and privileges which were accorded the Church in respect of consecrated portions of burial-grounds should remain. The hon. Member who had brought forward the Bill had stated that its object was to promote peace and good will. He would like to ask how that object was likely to be promoted by the provisions of Clause 4. The hon. Member admitted the existence of religious differences with reference to the subject of burials, and yet Clause 4 proposed that one building only should be used for every kind of burial. No doubt they must all agree with the late Bishop Fraser that, if possible, these differences should be so far modified that one system of burial should obtain, but they had not arrived at that time yet. There was no disguising the fact that such differences did exist, and he believed it was impossible to obliterate them by the provision of a single building which was to be used for every form of religion, and not limited even to the Christian Religion. Until the day came when there was a greater approximation between the religious views of different bodies of Christians, it was surely far better to leave it to Burial Boards to provide separate chapels for the conduct of funerals. Clause 5 provided that the decision of the Bishop should not be required to the plan of any building, or to the fitness of any tomb or monumental inscription in any public burial-ground. The power which, under the present law, was vested in the Bishop had not been shown to have been harshly or improperly exercised in any single instance, and could only be exercised in the interests of peace and goodwill. Clause 6 was entirely too vague, for, whilst it made it lawful for a Burial Authority to appoint a Chaplain, it contained no provision whatever as to his qualifications or stipend. The present law seemed to work without difficulty, and he failed to see the advantage of making the law uncertain. By Clause 8 an important change was proposed to be effected. As the law stood at present, the Incumbent might either perform the Burial Service himself, or delegate the duty to his Curate, or to some other duly-qualified person. The clause seemed to mean that the person having charge of the funeral of any person belonging to any parish, might require the Incumbent personally to leave all his other duties, to go down to Woking or some distant place, and there perform the Funeral Service, and that in the absence of this formality he was not to be entitled to perform any service at, or otherwise interfere in respect of, such funeral, however much the family might desire his presence. He submitted to the House that, if this was intended to be a personal duty on the part of the Incumbent, excluding him from the privilege of finding someone else to perform the duty, it was an undue restriction upon the rights of living parishioners to the service of their Incumbent. He did not see how (unless this Bill was to be a step in the direction of Disestablishment) it could be proposed to curtail the rights and duties of the clergy, and the privileges of the laity to have the funeral service performed, by the arbitrary requirement of the formality of a requisition. With regard to Part II. of the Bill, surely the modern habits rather tended to limit the hours during which funerals took place, and he thought sufficient consideration had not been given to the reasons for restricting the right of burial in churchyards on Sundays and the other excepted days. Did the hon. Member who introduced the Bill think it seemly that, during the hours of Divine worship in the church on Sundays, Good Fridays, or Christmas Days, a Nonconformist funeral should be going on in the churchyard? Provision should at least be made for limiting the hours for funerals, whether Church of England or Nonconformist, so as not to clash with those of Divine service on these days. He was not there to defend the manner in which some clergymen in different parts of the country had or had not endeavoured to give effect to the law. In certain cases the law had not been carried out with a good grace but with a bad grace, and no doubt unnecessary obstacles had been interposed. But what Bill would ever prevent cases of friction where people were not inclined to show good will. He asserted that the cases of difficulty were comparatively few, and in most parts of the country the Act was administered without friction. There were certainly not sufficient cases to necessitate resort to a change in the law. He did not know whether there was a direct obligation to allow the use of the bier. He should have thought the use of such things followed as a matter of course from the right of burial in the churchyard. He believed it was the duty of the sexton—whether Nonconformist or Church of England rites were performed—to make proper provision for the burial. Then came the question of tolling the bell. He was told that there were not many cases in which the tolling of the bell had been refused. The right hon. Member for Denbighshire, when he introduced the Burials Bill in 1880, did not consider that a matter of importance at all to Nonconformists. If that were so—if Nonconformists did not care very much for the tolling of the church bell—why was it necessary to provide for it under this Bill? He now came to Clause 14, about which the hon. Member who introduced the Bill said nothing, but which was a very important clause to members of the Church of England. It prohibited any public corporate body—either aggregate or sole, including thereby the rector or incumbent of the parish—to sell, grant, or otherwise appropriate any glebe as an addition to the churchyard for the exclusive use of members of the Church of England. It was not many years since the House passed an Act to give facilities for the sale of glebe, and why should this restriction as to the sale of glebe be imposed on the clergy? If people in the parish desired that a small portion of graveyard should be allotted to members of the Church of England, and they could find a piece of glebe land suitable for the purpose, why should they be prevented from having it? The privilege of a burial-ground for their own exclusive use was granted to other religious bodies—such as Jews and Roman Catholics—and why not to members of the Church of England. That being the case, he asked the House to pause before it passed this most important clause of the Bill, in support of which no reason had been given to the House. Regarding the question of burial fees, he believed he was correct in saying that their regulation was under the jurisdiction of the Home Office. If the Home Office authorities considered an alteration of the law was necessary, it would only be right that they should listen to any arguments in that direction that the proper authority should place before them. But that was a very different thing from saying that they would sanction all sorts of restrictions at the instance of an hon. Member whose experience and interest in the matter none disputed, but who had not the means that the Home Office would have of knowing what would be just and fair in the matter of these fees. If a change in the law were required, it ought to come from the authority which had the control and regulation of these matters. He thought he was justified in asking the House not to read the Bill a second time, and he accordingly did so.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) said, that the Members on that side of the House had no reason to complain of the tone and temper of the hon. Member who had introduced the Bill; but yet the Bill illustrated in a marked degree the attitude of hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House in respect to the treatment of questions which concerned the religious laws and the practices which hitherto fellow-citizens had been allowed to enjoy without disturbance. The Bill was not intended to meet any necessities which had arisen since the passing of the Act of 1880, but it was rather a step in the development of a policy which was to be applied in the Bill of which the Chief Secretary for Ireland was in charge, and apparently was to be extended to all the measures of a Liberal Government. The practice of the Liberal Party was to pass a measure, declaring that it was to be final, and to obtain assent to it on that ground, and then, a few years after, to come to Parliament and say that the measure was not final, that the question must be re-opened, and that credit was due to them for having left it untouched for 15 years. It was not for him to protest against a policy of that kind; but the adoption of it entitled him to say that when a Liberal measure was presented to them they must look at it not merely in reference to what it contained, but also as a link in a long chain of Legislation, and as a step which might lead to consequences far more objectionable than the Bill itself. He seconded the rejection of the Bill because no necessity had been shown for passing it. The hon. Member spoke of a few occasions on which there had been difficulties at the funerals of Nonconformists, and attributed it to the conduct of country clergymen. As a body he respected them, but there might be among them those who were not always wise or just; but he attributed many of the difficulties which had arisen less to the fear of odium on the part of Nonconformists than to the desire of Dissenters to be buried according to the practice of the Church of England. As a matter of fact, in many of the cases that had been adduced, as was pointed out by the hon. Member himself, the conduct of the clergy was illegal, and you could not, by further Legislation, prevent men from acting illegally. The obvious remedy was to appeal to the tribunals. The speech of the Mover went to show that the main object of the Bill was to destroy, as far as possible, any distinction which might exist between consecrated and unconsecrated ground. He denied that this House had any right to attempt to deprive any citizens of the comfort they might derive from the fact that their friends had been, or that they would be, buried in consecrated ground. He understood that the reason for the passing of the Act of 1880 was that, under the law as it then existed, there were difficulties of such great magnitude, conditions so onerous, in regard to the burial of Nonconformists, that they amounted to a denial of justice. He desired to apply the same test to this Bill—for example, to Clause 2, which prevented a distinction being made between consecrated and unconsecrated ground. The effect of the clause would be that no one would know whether he was likely to be buried in consecrated or unconsecrated ground. If the clause were not passed Nonconformists would suffer no hardship, because it was clear that they could be buried in the consecrated portion of burial-grounds if their friends desired it. He heard some hon. Members saying that no one could be the worse for being buried in unconsecrated ground. But a large number of people did desire to be buried in consecrated ground, and, surely, that was a legitimate desire. Why should an obstacle be put in their way? The clause was unnecessary and bad. The fourth clause proposed to enact that any building which had been consecrated might be used for any service whatsoever. Was any kind of ceremony, religious or irreligious, to be performed in a consecrated edifice? Why should they injure the religious susceptibilities of Churchmen by giving their sanction to a proposal of this kind? If this clause were passed, a man who had no religious opinions at all would be able to declaim eulogies on his dead friends from the altars of the Church. Surely hon. Members opposite could not intend that it should be possible to use for infidel or atheistic purposes chapels which had been consecrated with the greatest solemnity. Clause 5, which had been described as simple and innocuous, would abolish the present power of control in respect of tombs in churchyards. But there must be some control, unless it was intended to permit any kind of inscription upon a tomb. [An hon. MEMBER: "Let the Burial Board have control."] The local authority would hardly be the best judge of the suitability of an inscription for a sacred place; but, as a matter of fact, no controlling power of the kind was given to the Local Authority by this Bill. Clause 11 would give Nonconformists the right to insist that a funeral should take place on a Sunday, or on Good Friday, or on Christmas Day. Why was that proposed? Would Nonconformists suffer any injustice if they were not permitted to bury members of their congregations on those particular days—days, be it remembered, on which almost continuous services were performed in our churches? What injustice could be caused by the postponement of a funeral for one day? Section 13 would take away the control of the Incumbent over the management of the graveyard of his church. If the clause passed he would no longer be able to determine where the graves were to be. The civil right to burial of Nonconformists did not include the right to be buried in any part of a churchyard which they might select. A sub-section related to the question of tolling the bell. The right to toll the bell was excluded specifically from the Act of 1880. There was a Division upon the question, and the Government tellers told against the insertion of a provision of this kind. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Denbighshire said on that occasion that the Burials Bill dealt with churchyards and, therefore, in his opinion, conferred no right as to tolling of the bell. The fact was, that this was a case of development from the churchyard into the church. The intention, no doubt, was that at a future time Nonconformist services should be held in the churches. But he warned hon. Members opposite that they would not be able to stop there in this process of development. If they were going to throw the churches open for use by the Nonconformist bodies they would be asked to throw them open to the Unitarian bodies, and finally they would be asked to permit not only services of an orderly and Christian character in the churchyards, but also the declamations of infidels. Under Clause 14, a public body was restrained from conveying a glebe or other public land for the purpose of providing a burying-ground. What was the necessity for a provision of that kind? After all, though hon. Members opposite would not agree with the Church of England, there were a large number of people who did. These liked to be buried in consecrated as distinguished from other ground, and why should not the Rating Authorities be allowed to meet the wishes of a large number of ratepayers in that way? Where did it hurt Nonconformists, or injure anything Nonconformists held dear, that a particular piece of land should be allotted for purposes which were demanded by a large number, probably the majority, of the ratepayers? Clause 16 said that the expression "public burying-ground" included any ground added to a churchyard by a Burial Authority after the commencement of this Act. So that if a Burial Authority found a churchyard full, they could not enlarge it without the particular piece of land added being made subject to all the disqualifications of this measure. That appeared to be a great hardship. In a large town, when a churchyard got too full, it ought to be perfectly possible for the public authority to join with a particular denomination in enlarging it, and there ought to be no disability attaching to the particular ground. For all these reasons, he submitted, the Bill proceeded on totally wrong lines. If the hon. Member had come to the House and said there was any injustice in connection with the fees, any difficulties which interfered with the civil rights of burial of Nonconformists, or about holding their services in public burial grounds, the House would carefully have considered the case, but he wanted to abolish the distinction between what was consecrated and what was not. A great many of our fellow subjects, however, believed in consecration and liked it, and so long as no injustice was inflicted upon Nonconformists, Legislators ought to be prepared, as far as in them lay, to provide that which their fellow citizens demanded, and which they had every right to have.

*MR. R. W. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth), said, the noble Lord, who had always been anxious, however much or little he failed in the endeavour, to understand the views of Nonconformists, asked what limit was to be placed upon the process of legislative evolution? He was afraid there was no limit to legislative finality in this country, except the common sense of the majority of the people expressed at the polling booths. He could, however, conceive nothing more derogatory to religious progress than parcelling out our cemeteries or burial grounds into a series of spiritual allotments. The noble Lord said he had heard or read somewhere of Nonconformists who expressed a most acute anxiety to be buried with the rites of the Established Church. It was possible such people might exist. He knew that in the constituency the late Attorney General represented, some people were buried with the rites of the Established Church, and some of them were his Nonconformist supporters, but it was not because they wished to be so buried. He held in his hand a letter from one of those rare individuals, a dissenting Tory Minister, who, writing from Sandown, testified that in the Isle of Wight—

> "it required no little courage to secure for Methodists churchyard rites ;"

and further that—

> "the people were afraid to displace the Vicar, for in the few cases where burial had taken place in accordance with the Act of 1880, he had manifested his spleen by using all the powers which the Law allowed."

Most people who had confidence in the common sense of the people would never fear that if this Bill was passed, altars, if they existed in consecrated burial places, would be used for the purposes described by the noble Lord. The day was far distant when the awful pictures held up for their alarm by the noble Lord would be realised. If anyone would go to the large cemeteries round London, such as Kensal Green, or Abney Park, both of which, he understood, were in the hands of limited companies, and, therefore, perhaps not kept under such rigid control as a local authority would exercise, he would see that the imaginative fears of the noble Lord had no foundation whatever, so far as the inscriptions or the style of monument was concerned. There was nothing to offend the religious taste of the most fastidious people. He thought the views expressed by the hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill, and who had a large proportion of Roman Catholics in his constituency, would not be found to be in harmony with those of the authorities of that religious community. Roman Catholics were as anxious as other sections of Nonconformists for the Amendments of the Law contained in this Bill. The Wesleyans, the Methodists, the Independents, the Presbyterians, had all, through their Parliamentary Committees and governing bodies, petitioned this House over and over again to amend the Burial Laws, and this not from any desire at all to pull down the Church of England. To a large extent, the Conservative Party itself had, in previous years, freely and frankly admitted the necessity of some such amendment of the Law. Reference had been made to Marten's Act. The Corporation of the City of Oxford, which contained, he presumed, a very large proportion of Churchmen, had adopted that Act in preference to the Burials Act. And why? Not because they objected to consecration, for no Nonconformist objected to consecration as a religious ceremony. He quite understood the desire of large bodies of people, including many Nonconformists, to be buried in land dedicated, by some religious ceremony, to the reception of the dead. He did not believe in consecration to the same extent and by the same method as the noble Lord; but he fully recognised the importance and justice of providing burial-grounds in consecrated land for Church-people and other people who might wish to be interred in such grounds. What Nonconformists objected to was not consecration as a religious ceremony, but the pecuniary conditions and the legal surroundings which followed the ecclesiastical ceremony of consecration. They did not think it was reasonable to expect the local authorities to raise such sums of money as £10,000 or £15,000 by rates from the local community, in order to provide cemeteries, and that a large percentage of revenues arising from the expenditure of that money should go into the pockets of the local clergy who did not do one stroke of work for the fees which they received. That really was the objection which local corporations had to the ceremony of consecration. The noble Lord objected that there would be no line of demarcation between the consecrated portion and the unconsecrated portion. But, surely, if the ceremony of consecration took place, there would be some method, such as by a map or a plan, for informing the person who would perform the ceremony of the portion that was to be consecrated. He thought a division of the land by means of boundaries, gates and posts would only perpetuate those feelings of animosity which the noble Lord expressed his desire to see disappear. The Tory Party, or rather some Members of it, had shown, by the support given to Marten's Act, some desire to remove the grievances of the Nonconformists in this matter. Three years ago, a Public Health (Interments) Amendment Bill, having for its object the removal of some of the difficuities which the present measure aimed at removing, was brought in by a Conservative Member and backed entirely by Members of the same Party. And Mr. Ritchie, who was President of the Local Government Board in the late Conservative Government, addressing a deputation on the subject, expressed the belief that the law should be amended; that it was not desirable, in the interests of the peace and good order of localities, that there should be those conflicting religious matters disturbing the local boards; and that it would be greatly to the advantage of the good government of the local districts, if those serious difficulties in the way of the working of the Burials Act were removed. His hon. Friend who moved the Second Reading of the Bill, said that local communities had had to struggle hard with the Home Office to resist the duty which the late Home Secretary and the present Home Secretary felt they were bound to discharge under the existing law. He could conceive nothing more objectionable to a Party in Office than to have to put into force a law which was repugnant to their feelings. But though Dissenters had often occasion in local districts to complain of the operation of the law under Marten's Act, as administered by the Local Government Board, and under the Burials Act as controlled by the Home Office, they recognised that it was the duty of the Departments to administer the existing law. It had been said that instances of clerical intolerance were few. He was sorry to say that, on the contrary, they were extremely many, and he did not see any likelihood of their becoming fewer in the future. The views of Nonconformity on matters of religious doctrine, ritual and discipline, were becoming more widely divergent from the views of the Church of England every day, and there was also a wider separation between Nonconformists and Churchpeople on political and social questions, so that it was improbable that the Burials Law, as it existed, would be worked with even the measure of toleration with which it had been worked in the past. He had in his hand a letter from a clergyman named Morgan, who lived at Mochdre, in Montgomeryshire, in reference to the case of a lady, a non-parishioner, whose friends desired their relative to be buried with her deceased husband in the churchyard. The Vicar wrote that a non-parishioner had no right to have a grave opened under the Act of 1880, and that in this case he would only open the grave on two conditions—first, the payment of 20s., which was three times the ordinary payment, and second, that no other burial service but the service of the Church of England would be allowed. There was a curious condition imposed by a clergyman in Devonshire recently, who refused to have anything to do with the burial of a local Dissenter, because the undertaker happened to be a Wesleyan.

"If that man is permitted to come into the Church, I will not perform the service—"

he said. The parties gave him notice, under the Act of 1880, to conduct the service with a Dissenting Minister, and thereupon he retorted by refusing to allow the burial to take place in the grave previously selected and previously approved by him; and the interment had to take place in a part of the churchyard called the "Strangers' Hill," to which Nonconformists were relegated. At Caldecote, in the county of Monmouth, a Vicar refused to allow a son to bury his Dissenting mother with his Dissenting father in a grave near the Church door, unless the service of the Church of England were allowed; and the son, who desired to have the Wesleyan service read over his mother by the resident Methodist Minister, was obliged to take his mother to be buried, five or six miles away, in Newport cemetery. Many Vicars charged a fee for tolling the bell for a Nonconformist funeral, and there were numerous cases in which a bier had been refused. In one case, which occurred near Stroud, the Vicar positively offered to pay the expense of the burial of a Roman Catholic in another cemetery, as he objected to a Roman Catholic in the churchyard; and when this was refused, the coffin had to be laid on two chairs in the churchyard, because the Vicar would not allow the bier to be used. It might be said that all those things were illegal, and that they could be prevented in a court of law. Even were that true, how could those poor people go to the expense of bringing the cases into a court of law? There were also many doubtful points under the Act of 1880, which Nonconformists reasonably and legitimately desired should be cleared up. For instance, Clause 14 of the Bill provided that any private land purchased for churchyard purposes, should be subject to the conditions of the Act of 1880, as amended by the present Bill if it were passed. The object of the clause was to meet a rather common case of attempted evasion of the condition of the Act of 1880, by the purchase of a piece of land adjacent to the churchyard, vesting it in trustees, and declaring that it was Church property, in which people could only be buried with the rites of the English Church. If Churchmen liked to select a piece of land and to be buried there by special rites, this was a free country, and as long as they observed sanitary regulations, they might be buried there to their hearts' contents. But his objection was to colourable evasions of the Act of 1880. He would mention a case, which came to his notice a few years ago, in order to show why it was asked that the length of notice should be shortened from 48 hours to 24. The case occurred at Kilndown in Kent, in connection with the death of the son of a Wesleyan labourer. The Wesleyan Minister walked a distance of ten miles to conduct the child's funeral; but the funeral party were stopped at the churchyard gates by the Curate, who said that the funeral could not take place because only 46 hours' notice instead of 48 had been given. This was on a Thursday; a new notice had to be drawn up, and, as Sunday was a *dies non*, the funeral could not take place till Monday. The Rector was away in the first instance, but when he returned he discovered another informality—namely, that the second notice had not been signed by the same person as the first. The funeral party was again met at the churchyard gate by the Rector and the Curate, and a long protest was read by the latter. As the case had come to his knowledge, he had written a private letter to the Rector saying that if the funeral were interfered with a second time he should apply to the courts of law for an Injunction to restrain the interference with the funeral. In consequence of that letter the child was allowed to be buried on the Monday by the Wesleyan Minister. It had been stated in the House recently that Dissenters did not understand the sentiment and imagination with which Churchmen surrounded their graveyards. In years to come would there be no sentiment and imagination in the minds of the children who attended this funeral with respect to the Established Church? There was nothing more derogatory to the dignity of the Church than these unseemly scenes, and nothing more calculated to bring the Church into contempt. Such action was not isolated, but of frequent occurrence among the local clergy. On that ground, as an English Nonconformist, he thanked the hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill, and hoped it would receive the support of the Government.

MR. J. W. SIDEBOTHAM (Cheshire, Hyde) said, that he had for several Sessions a Bill on this subject in his charge. If he had not re-introduced the Bill this Session it was not because his opinions had changed, but because he had been unsuccessful in the ballot. The present Bill, however, contained some proposals which were most mischievous and irritating, and which no Churchman could support. The first part dealt almost exclusively with cemeteries provided by the local authorities; and in this connection no one would deny that some Legislation was needed. He was connected with three separate districts in the north, and in each of them during the last six years the cemetery question had been a burning question. It was the prominent question in all local elections, and in one district at least it was the only question. In each place the local authority had provided a cemetery, and had refused application for a portion to be consecrated. In the Hyde Town Council the question was constantly giving rise to acrimonious debates; and this condition of things would certainly increase, because every year the churchyards were becoming more crowded, and the possibility of enlarging them, except in country places, was becoming infinitesimal. In the north the local authority usually provided the cemetery under the Public Health Interment Act of 1875, known as Marten's Act. Under that Act the question of consecration or non-consecration was left absolutely to the discretion of the local authority; and in the majority of cases they refused to permit consecration. The ground of refusal was almost always the same. The objection was not to consecration *per se*, but to the rights and privileges which consecration carried with it. Under the present law, if a portion of a cemetery were consecrated, that portion became for all practical purposes an extension of the parish churchyard. The Bishop could require the local authority to appoint a chaplain, to whom they had to pay such salary as the Bishop approved. The chaplain kept the register, and his consent was necessary to the appointment of some of the minor officials. Then the local authority was compelled to build within the consecrated portion a chapel on plans approved by the Bishop, and the Bishop had a right of veto over every monumental inscription in the consecrated portion. Further, the burial fees could be claimed by the incumbent, whether he was present or not; and the consecration fees had to be paid by the local authority. He could understand the feelings—though he thought they were exaggerated—of those who said that the instantaneous effect of consecration was to remove all popular control from the consecrated portion, and to make it the property of the Bishop. These grievances were recognised as legitimate grievances by many Churchpeople. At Wakefield a very strong Committee was appointed by the Bishop of the diocese to consider the question of the consecration of the burial-ground. This Committee reported that the consecrated portion of any new burial-ground carried with it the right to the incumbent which was vested in him with regard to the churchyard; and that it was objected, in consequence, that the new burial-ground provided by the rates might become a new endowment for the incumbent. The Committee were of opinion that such an objection as that ought to be satisfied, as it was not difficult to make arrangements, and they recommended that legal security should be given, if possible, by insertion of some clause in the deed of consecration. With regard to the cost of consecration, and the provision of chapels, the Committee pointed out that difficulties might arise, but sufficient latitude was given under the Act for such difficulties to be met by concession or arrangement. So that this strong Committee suggested that consecration fees should be paid voluntarily by Churchmen, and that the difficulty as to chapels could be met by arrangement. He would take one other instance: the Church of England clergy had presented a memorial to the Hythe County Council within the last three weeks, signed by all the Churchpeople and clergy in Hythe. That memorial stated that the only point of difference which existed was the retention of the fee for interment by the Church of England clergy, and that to remedy this all the clergy of the borough had unanimously agreed not to receive the fee when the funeral service was not conducted by them. That was to say, that under the law these clergy were entitled to receive certain fees, but they had unanimously agreed to set aside the law and to make no claim to these fees. As regarded the appointment of a chaplain, the proposal had been made that it should be merely a nominal one, with a stipend of only a pound a year. He contended that all these concessions proved conclusively that the privileges which existed were not wanted, nor even valued, by those who possessed them; and that there was no reason why they should be removed by law. In a circular which had been issued by the Liberation Society it had been stated that the Bill would free Nonconformists from endless exactions. He was sorry to see such a statement as that, because it tended to make the Bill a Party measure; but it was the greatest mistake in the world to suppose that Churchmen were not as much interested in the settlement of this question as Nonconformists. The present state of things was that the churchyards were full, or almost full, while the Local Authority provided a cemetery but refused to consecrate any portion of it. A cruel injustice was thus done to the Churchman who had to pay his share towards the purchase and maintenance of the cemetery, while he was practically precluded from using it. They wanted consecrated ground, but they did not wish to deprive the Local Anthority of its legitimate rights. He, for one, would be quite content to leave the absolute control of such consecrated ground to the Local Authority. He had no fear that they would abuse their trust by allowing indecent or blasphemous inscriptions on any of the monuments, or any violation of the sanctity of the place. He believed a better plan was that adopted by the Roman Catholic Church, whose priest consecrated the individual grave at the time of interment; but, failing that, he was prepared to support a reasonable alteration of the present law. Clause 2 provided that a certain portion of the ground might be consecrated, but would not allow any means of identifying that portion. He thought that to make that proposal was to trifle with the question. Was the hon. Member aware that it had been held that a pathway was a sufficient line of demarcation between consecrated and unconsecrated ground? Would he refuse to allow even a pathway to distinguish the consecrated area? No Bishop would ever dream of consecrating any portion of ground the position of which was unknown. He urged that cemetery chapels built for the Church of England, and consecrated for their service, should not be thrown open to any other bodies, and suggested that the Local Authority should have power to build three chapels if desired. There were some portions of the Bill of which he approved, and some to which he very strongly objected; after considerable hesitation he had concluded to give his support to the Bill, while reserving to himself entire liberty of action in Committee, as he thought that in Committee it would be possible to remove the most objectionable features of the Bill.

*Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) said, it was exactly 25 years ago since he had first brought this question before the House of Commons, and it took ten years to carry into law that most moderate instalment of justice, the Act of 1880. So moderate was that Act that Lord Selborne, whom no one could accuse of hostility to the Church, consented to take charge of it in the House of Lords. The Act of 1880 and the present Bill dealt with different matters—the Act dealt principally with churchyards, but this Bill related mainly to cemeteries. It was true that when he moved the Second Reading of the Bill of 1880 he expressed the hope that that Measure would close a painful and distressing controversy, but he had been disappointed. Still, not one of the terribly gloomy predictions which were made at the time as the consequence of the passing of the Act had been fulfilled. True, there had been many scandals, but none of them had come from Nonconformists. He was willing to admit that the great majority of the clergy had accepted the Act of 1880 frankly and loyally, but there was this defect in it—it left the churchyard in the absolute control and power of the Incumbent, who, therefore, had the power to decide where a parishioner should be buried in the churchyard, and whether a non-parishioner should be buried there at all. But that power was not given to the Incumbent for the benefit of the Church and Churchmen only; it was given for the benefit of the whole parish. Incumbents, however, had over and over again, especially in Wales, asserted the right of refusing burials in the churchyards to non-parishioners unless the service of the Church of England were used. This, he contended, was a distinct fraud on the Act, and it had caused much pain and inconvenience. It was intended, therefore, by the 12th Section of the Bill to prevent the recurrence of that injustice. The question of the cemeteries was now far more important than that of the churchyards, for, while the latter were everywhere being closed, cemeteries were constantly increasing in number. Under Marten's Act of 1845, it was not obligatory on burial authorities to consecrate any portion of a cemetery, but, on the other hand, the 21st and 22nd Victoria, s. 12, made it imperative on them, not only to consecrate a portion of the cemetery, but also to build a chapel on the consecrated ground. This had been productive of the greatest possible inconvenience and hardship to parishes. The cemeteries were provided and supported out of the rates, and over and over again various Burial Boards had endeavoured to find some way of avoiding the hardship. The noble Lord thc Member for Rochester had asked why they should object to consecration. The answer of the Nonconformists was, that they had not the slightest objection to it as a religious ceremony. There was no reason why, under the present Bill, if it passed into law, any part, two-thirds, or even the whole, of a cemetery should not be consecrated. But what Nonconformists objected to was, that consecration should carry with it the legal consequences it did at present. On this point he might cite the opinions of many eminent Churchmen, including one Archhishop and five Bishops, who all deprecated in the strongest terms the perpetuation of this division in God's Acre between consecrated and unconsecrated ground. He believed the question would have been solved long since but for the one matter of fees. On this point there was an immense body of evidence collected by the Select Committee, which sat some years since on the question, and examined 33 witnesses. Witness after witness spoke to the great hardship inflicted on Nonconformists by the payment of double fees. The substance of that evidence, as stated in the report of the Committee, was that—

> "As regards burial fees proper, there exists the greatest possible divergence of practice in various parts of the country, consequent upon the fact that (excepting in a few cases where they have been made the subject of statutory enactment) this payment is governed entirely by the custom of each individual parish. In many parishes (including nearly the whole diocese of Salisbury) no fee at all is payable for the simple interment of a parishioner in the parochial churchyard or cemetery. In other places, as in a large part of North Wales, no fixed fee is paid in such a case, and the clergyman is remunerated for performing the service by the voluntary offerings of the persons present at the funerals. In cases where the custom is to charge a fixed fee for the burial of a parishioner, that fee varies from a few pence to several shillings; but the charge rises rapidly where the right to a brick grave or enclosed space is sought to be purchased; and instances are not infrequent in which five guineas, and even more, are claimed for such a privilege in the case of the burial of a non-parishioner in the parish churchyard. In that case the Incumbent is practically at liberty to demand any fee he likes, inasmuch as he is not under any legal obligation to permit the burial to take place at all."

The Committee went on to say that, whilst on the one hand unpleasantness arose if a clergyman refused to permit an interment to take place until his fee was paid, on the other hand, if he allowed the funeral to take place without claiming his fee, it was doubtful whether he would be able to recover it. From the point of view of either clergyman or parishioners, it was impossible to conceive a state of things more unsatisfactory than that; and, accordingly, the Committee, by a majority, recommended that burial fees should be abolished or uniformly reduced to very small sums. One thing on which they were agreed was, that no fees should be paid at all if the service were not performed by the Incumbent. These were the principles applied in the Bill, but not carried to their full extent, while care was taken to preserve the rights of existing Incumbents. Nearly all the objections that had been raised to the Bill referred to details which would be properly considered in Committee. Then what was there really to object to in the Bill? The Committee stated that the loss in fees to the clergy would be exceedingly small. Putting the question of fees aside, could anyone desire that the distinction between consecrated and unconsecrated ground should be maintained? Could the keeping up of these "spiritual allotments," as they had been called, be for the benefit of the Church? The late Dean of Chester, Dr. Howson, speaking in the Convocation of York on July 6, 1880, and referring to cemetery divisions, said:—

> "Duplicate chapels were conspicuous everywhere about the country. Travellers from the Continent of Europe, and especially from America, were struck with them, and asked what was the reason; and the answer was: 'It is the principle of the English—a principle that, even in death, we are to be visibly divided.' Our children were brought up in the sight of these duplicate chapels, and when they asked what was the meaning of these circumstances their answer was: 'It is the existing principle of the English that even the wounds which have been felt during lifetime cannot be healed in death.' A gentleman once said to him: 'These divided cemetery chapels are the very petrification of Dissent.' If we wanted to weaken the Church of England and strengthen Nonconformity, he should say: 'Perpetuate this system of burial chapels and divided cemeteries.'"

He believed the Dean was right. Speaking from experience, he could say that nothing had done more, especially in Wales, to weaken the Church, and to hasten and strengthen the demand for Disestablishment, than the attitude adopted by certain of the clergy upon this burials question; for surely God's Acre and the open grave were the very worst battle-ground that could be chosen by the defenders of the Church. In the words of Dean Howson, therefore, he would say: "If you want to weaken the Church, and strengthen Nonconformity, reject this Bill."

*Mr. H. MATTHEWS (Birmingham, E.) said, that he was quite free from the passionate feelings that had animated speakers on both sides of the House. He was not a member of the Church of England, nor of one of those Dissenting bodies that had taken part in the controversy on the burials question; and he desired to view the Bill in a very dry light indeed. When hon. Members opposite spoke of scandals under the Act of 1880 his sympathies were with them. When the Act was passed he conceived it to be the duty of the clergy of the Church of England loyally and liberally to give effect to its provisions, and he hoped that petty annoyances and squabbles were about to be entirely avoided. But it was the very smallest part of the Bill, as he viewed it, that was directed to the prevention of such scandals. A great deal had been made of the case of the non-parishioner, but he must protest against that case being made a grievance, because the claim to bury a non-parishioner was a distinct wrong to the parish, and it did not make any difference whether he was a Churchman or a Dissenter. The question of the non-parishioner ought to be put aside altogether. The clause relating to a non-parishioner was one of the most objectionable clauses foisted into the Bill; and rather than pass it he would prefer to prohibit the burial of a non-parishioner in a parochial burial-ground or a churchyard.

Sir W. HARCOURT: How if he dies in the parish?

*Mr. MATTHEWS said, if he slept there one night he was a parishioner. He must express the strongest objection to the proposal that any burial authority might take land compulsorily for the purposes of a burial-ground. The Bill went beyond all former Burial and Cemetery Acts, which did not give compulsory powers; and, while the Bill incorporated a single clause of the Public Health Act, which gave compulsory powers to sanitary authorities, it did not incorporate the clauses which imposed a variety of limitations and restrictions. It was true that Marten's Act gave compulsory powers to sanitary authorities; but it incorporated all the clauses of the Public Health Act. He remembered the vehement feelings, quite unconnected with any question of Church or Dissent, which used to be aroused by the attempt to form a cemetery anywhere, and how localities rose up in arms against such proposals. To give such compulsory power to a Cemetery Company would be an unwise piece of Legislation, and likely to raise a large storm of opposition in the localities where it was sought to apply those powers. The succeeding clauses formed the most amusing attack on the Church of England he had ever seen. The members of that Church liked to be buried in consecrated ground by a chaplain of their own body, and as the burial service of their Church prescribed. However much the hon. Member and his friends might commiserate with that state of mind they must admit it was a perfectly legitimate one to be in. But the hon. Member had produced a set of clauses which would make it impossible to consecrate cemeteries, and, accordingly, no member of the Church could be buried in it without a great shock being given to the members of that particular denomination. It had been said that a portion of the ground could be consecrated, say a third; but a part could not be marked out for that purpose, and he ventured to inform the House that there could be no such thing as the consecration of an undefined part of a cemetery. There must be a defined space in order to consecrate at all. The ground so consecrated, however, the Bill proposed to throw open for the burial of all kinds of persons, and, although the Rubrics of the Church of England prohibited certain classes being buried in its cemeteries, yet this Bill was to make all interments compulsory. The Bill also provided that no consecration fees were to be claimed, and no fees in fact beyond what were paid elsewhere were to be paid for a burial in the consecrated part of the cemetery. Perhaps it did not become him to speak of such a matter, but he could not help thinking that the Church of England would have exercised much wisdom if it had settled that question in Convocation. But, whatever feeling they might have with regard to the question of fees, that was hardly the place to deal with them. It was a purely domestic question resting between the members of the Church of England and her clergy. Then, again, there was the matter of the chapels already consecrated which had been built out of the funds of the Church for the burial services of her members; but he would not say much about the gross and flagrant proposal of the Bill that she should no longer have the use of them. What did the Bill propose in that respect? That they should be open to Mahomedans and Pagans and whosoever might be taken there. In fact, it turned the chapels into common buildings available for all classes of persons, which he thought an extremely unjust and improper course. Then there was a minor point which provided that in the consecrated part of the burial-ground the Bishop was to have no voice over the monumental inscriptions. What grievance could Dissenters possibly have in the fact that a Bishop should have some control over the monumental inscriptions over those who in life had looked upon him as their spiritual head? The clause regarding paupers would repeal two Acts of Parliament, which were well considered at the time of their passing, and was to him inconceivable and unintelligible. Then there was Clause 8. He did not know whether the hon. Member was aware what that clause would do, but if the House would look into it they would see that it gave to Nonconformists, in a new burial-ground, acquired exclusively by some particular parish, power to exclude the vicar or rector as the case might be, and conduct their own service without any condition whatsoever. The first part of the Bill, therefore, would lead to a series of difficulties, which were intended to outrage the feelings of members of the Church of England, by depriving them of the possibility of funeral rites in these new cemeteries in accordance with their religious convictions. He had never been able to understand whence these passionate feelings against the Church had arisen. The members of that Church to which he belonged had for 300 years to conduct their burials in the churchyards of the Church of England, one of whose ministers always read the service. But, although those churches were parted by differences of doctrine and ritual as wide as any of those between the Church and the Dissenters, yet, so far as he was aware, the body to which he belonged never thought the prayers of a minister in religion would injure them. Of course they were now conducting their own funeral services, but he had never been able to understand the extraordinary passion which was raised in the Dissenting breast by the prayers of a Church of England minister. Then again with regard to the second part of the Bill, only a small part of it applied to the real grievances of the Dissenting body, and shortening the hours of notice would in no way have the effect of getting rid of matters such as had been complained of by the hon. Member for the Louth Division. With regard to the reluctance exhibited by some of the clergy of the Church of England to cordially obey the Burials Act of 1880, so far as his experience went, such cases were extremely few. During the six years he had been at the Home Office he did not remember more than three or four cases in which serious complaint was made of these most indecent hindrances thrown in the way of a funeral conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 1880. His belief was, that these cases were becoming rarer and rarer every day; but, still, some little indulgence might be shown towards those few clergy of the Church of England who—from narrow convictions perhaps, but from convictions which were perfectly sincere—resisted these new-fashioned funerals, in which some foreign religious service was introduced into the freehold of the Vicar. It was a piece of intolerable tyranny to insist that a clergyman of the Church of England should not be allowed, with the consent of his Bishop, to devote a portion of his glebe to burying members of the Church in a parish which had an overcrowded churchyard. The Bill did not attack any Roman Catholic or Wesleyan burial-ground, but only Church of England burial-grounds. For these reasons, and because the hon. Member had not thrown out any hint of a desire to modify these points, he intended to vote against the Second Reading of the Bill.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I cordially concur in what my right hon. Friend the Member for Denbighshire has said; and am astonished that friends of the Church of England should choose, as the battle-field upon which to fight the question of Establishment and Endowment, the open grave. I think it is a very unwise piece of strategy, and I think it is a course which will not commend itself to the judgment of right-thinking people in the country. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down practically admits all the grievances against which the Bill is directed. He spoke of his own experience at the Home Office. My experience of five years there was different from his. In my recollection there was, from the passing of the Act of 1880, a constant effort to defeat the intention of Parliament. This came before me in instances which, not wishing to shock the feelings of the House, I will not recite; but they were instances which I deeply deplored. It has been said by Members opposite that we were promised that the Act of 1880 should be final Legislation on this subject. It would have been final Legislation if the clergy of the Church of England had accepted the decision of Parliament in good faith. The right hon. Gentleman opposite objects first of all to the compulsory powers in the first clause. We had this same question raised, and, unhappily, resisted upon sectarian grounds, when Dissenters were not able to obtain sites for chapels. That Bill passed through the House of Commons, and it was altered in the House of Lords. [*Opposition Cries of* "No."]

*Sir C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): It passed through the Grand Committee.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Then I have been misinformed; it is, however, a grievance of exactly the same character.

Viscount CRANBORNE: The right. hon. Gentleman is quite in error. We did not resist the Bill. It passed through this House by arrangement.

Sir W. HARCOURT: If the noble Lord says so, I will not question it for a moment; but I will go back to the question of compulsory powers. The right hon. Gentleman has raised the question of consecration. No one contends for a moment that members of the Church of England should not have the right of burial in consecrated ground if they desire it; but the right hon. Gentleman raises the question of the absolute necessity of a provision to have consecrated ground. He knows perfectly well the whole history of this question at the Home Office, and that the Home Office has been called upon to insist upon a division of consecrated ground in the cemeteries taken by Burial Boards; and he knows that the Home Office has been utterly unable to enforce such conditions, and have been advised by their legal advisers on the subject.

*Mr. MATTHEWS: The right hon. Gentleman is referring to the law under which the previous consent of the Home Office must be obtained before new ground can be opened. It is quite true that the refusal is one which can only be given on sanitary grounds; but the moment they have got their cemetery, the Burial Boards are bound to consecrate part of it. I myself obtained a mandamus in the case of two or three Burial Boards, which immediately dissolved.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The Home Office cannot enforce the condition, and, consequently, if the Home Office persists, the Burial Boards elude the Home Office. But what the right hon. Gentleman lays down as a profound principle in reference to the separation of the consecrated from the unconsecrated land falls to the ground altogether. There is another matter which has been touched rather gingerly by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and which I observed the right hon. Gentleman especially shirked—that was the question of fees. The right hon. Gentleman said nothing about them; but there is the question not only of Establishment, but the question of Endowment; and the question of fees is considered quite as material a part of this business as consecration—probably much more so. What is the situation with reference to the question of fees? There was a Committee on Ecclesiastical and Mortuary Fees in 1882, and that Committee reported:—

> "Your Committee recommend that if ecclesiastical burial fees, as distinct from secular charges for the burial of parishioners within prescribed hours, are retained at all, Legislation for their regulation should be based on the principle that they are only to be retained in cases where a burial service of the Church of England is actually read over the corpse to be buried, or on behalf of the Incumbent demanding the fee."

That is the just principle which is incorporated in this Bill in favour of abolition. Again, the Committee state that—

> "there is the almost universal practice in the diocese of Salisbury, and the recommendation of the Bishop and Synod of Salisbury, that there should be no ecclesiastical fee for the burial of a parishioner in a common grave. There is also the practice of many parishes in various parts of the country where parishioners are buried free of any ecclesiastical fee; and it should be remembered that by the early canons of the Church, which have not been rescinded, the clergy are forbidden to take any money payment for burial."

The spirit that dictated those early canons does not seem now to prevail. The view of the Church on that subject is not the same as it was in those days. I have heard of a deputation which recently went to the Home Office. One of the Members present was a gentleman from Hampstead, and he stated the case of Hampstead with reference to fees in the cemetery there, which was built out of the public money of the ratepayers. He says:—

> "The cemetery was opened in 1876, owing to the impossibility of the parish churchyard accommodating any more burials. The amount of loans raised was £26,500, and the calls on the rates since have amounted to £16,200 for the purposes of these Burial Acts. The number of interments in the consecrated ground since the opening have been 6,500, and the amount in fees received by the Incumbent has been £10,500, making the average fee which the Incumbent has received on each interment in consecrated ground 32s.; and, curiously enough, it is just over 30s. that the rates have been called upon on an average for every interment at that cemetery; and thus in the case of Hampstead the result is arrived at that, although Church rates have been abolished, yet they have practically reappeared in another form, since, for every 30s. that the ratepayers have been called upon to raise for the purpose of their cemetery, an equal amount has gone into the pocket of the Vicar."

This, therefore, is a very material question. It was a deputation, besides, not of Dissenters alone, but of persons who, I observe, were introduced by Mr. G. H. Allsopp, M.P., who cannot be regarded as a party to the sectarian view of the question with respect to fees being charged upon ground provided out of public money. The question of the exact right of property that the Incumbent had in the churchyard is another aspect of the subject; it is a property subject to the common right of the parishioners to be buried there; but when new land is purchased at the expense of the public, to contend that the Incumbent should be allowed to use land so provided out of public money for the purpose of increasing his own emoluments is, I think, a very questionable proposition indeed. They are not fees levied on the land of the Church, because that ground is the freehold of the parish, the freehold of the local community; yet there is a portion of that freehold which is employed for the purpose of increasing the emoluments of the Incumbent in the manner referred to in that representation of the deputation. I do not think that the noble Lord opposite said anything with reference to fees, yet the Bill deals with that question in a manner which is perfectly just and right. Having regard to the Report of the Committee of 1882, which I have quoted, which was composed of a number of names who were not hostile to the Church—names like those of Sir Edmund Lechmere, Mr. Stanley Leighton, Sir H. Fletcher, and other well-known men, who were ardent supporters of the claims of the Church, I think the House will pause a long time before it refuses a Second Reading to a Bill, which has for its object the redress of a grievance of this kind. It has been said that if they do not want to pay these fees the Nonconformists need not be buried in consecrated ground. But supposing that a person has become a Nonconformist, and that his relatives have been members of the Church of England, he naturally wishes to be buried by the side of his friends and nearest relatives. What is the consequence? His representatives are to be charged those fees in order to bury this man among his own family, simply because the ground happens to be consecrated in which his family were buried; and the clergyman of the Church of England, who does not perform the service, is to receive a fee for that burial. No right-minded man can fail to see that it would be an act of gross injustice to reject a Bill which proposes to redress a grievance of that character; indeed it would be a most unwise and improper act. I take, again, the case of chapels. What is this chapel to which hon. Gentlemen claim such an exclusive right? Whose money was it with which they were built? On what principle do you maintain that you have a right to build a church out of the rates and to appropriate it to the service of some particular community? A doctrine of this kind would not be accepted for a moment. Then we come to the other clauses, some portions of which the right hon. Gentleman admitted were necessary. But those clauses were necessary to prevent odious acts, he would not say of tyranny, but those methods which have been resorted and it is the duty of Parliament to provide against the exercise of those acts, almost spiteful in their character. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the action of the Nonconformists with reference to the Church of England; but there were also acts on the part of certain clergymen relating to the Nonconformists. The right hon. Gentleman admits and deplores acts of this character; but he does not deny that there are portions of the clauses which are directed to prevent in future these acts from being committed. He says:—

> "Oh! but you will never be able to prevent those acts of intolerant persecution in matters of this kind."

Well, we must try, and we must express the opinion of Parliament that actions of this kind are being condemned. It is because this Bill does, in fact, provide remedies against those acts, against extortion in the matter of fees, that, subject to discussion in Committee, and subject to whatever modifications may be thought proper to introduce in a Bill of this character, we shall certainly give on behalf of the Government a most hearty support to its Second Reading.

Sir R. E. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, that the right hon. Gentleman had not spoken one word as to several important matters which had been raised in the Debate as objections to the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman began by stating that, according to his experience at the Home Office, attempts were constantly being made by the clergy to evade the Act of 1880. The right hon. Gentleman left the Home Office in 1885; but he did not know of a single occasion during the right hon. Gentleman's stay at the Home Office, or since, when he had publicly declared, till to-day, that there was a necessity for further Legislation in regard to the Burials Act. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had entirely overlooked the objections to the Bill as far as it dealt with consecration. It was not a question of machinery or of getting over difficulties which occurred at the Home Office. Although in some cases the Burial Boards had been dissolved, they had generally found successors who were willing to obey the law.

SIR W. HARCOURT: But the Bishop would not consecrate.

SIR R. E. WEBSTER said, that he did not remember a case in his official life of the Bishop refusing to consecrate. The objection to the Bill was not that an amendment of the law in regard to consecration should be proposed; was not that there should be any extra freedom of use of the unconsecrated portion,—the objection was, that by this Bill, even where there had been a consecration before the Act, all restrictions and disabilities were to be removed; and that, in fact, the consecrated ground was to become unconsecrated for the purpose of burials. Neither the Mover of the Second Reading nor any other Member had suggested a shadow of grievance such as would call for Parliament taking a step which must be regarded by all Churchmen as a monstrous aggression, and as removing from consecrated ground all its sanctity.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The object of the Bill is not to remove the religious consecration. It is only to remove the exaction of fees and the interposition of obstacles to the burial of other people in consecrated ground.

SIR R. E. WEBSTER said, that he was referring to what was said by the promoters of the Bill, and to what the provisions of the Bill contained. If the right hon. Gentleman would read the Bill he would see that no effect could be given to its clauses without removing all restrictions as to burials in consecrated ground. The right hon. Gentleman had had a close and intimate connection with the Church of England, and did he suggest that the clergymen of that Church would regard with equanimity the reading of some service totally unconnected with the religious views of the Church in consecrated ground? Such provisions as those in the Bill ought not to be introduced except some grievance could be proved which it was impossible to remedy in any other way. As to the question of fees, it was a very singular thing that there was very little in the Bill about it. The right hon. Gentleman spoke as if the main object of the Bill were to get rid of these fees. He himself doubted very much whether the language of Clause 8 would effect what the right hon. Gentleman believed it would effect; but he noticed the Memorandum at the head of the Bill, which stated that all the existing rights of incumbents in regard to fees had been reserved. No one who had listened to the Debate could doubt that the question of fees was a very small portion of what the promoters of the Bill aimed at. The main object was shown by the first seven clauses, dealing with the removal of certain requirements now applicable to consecrated ground. On what ground was the Bishop to be deprived of the power of preventing in consecrated ground the inscriptions of epitaphs opposed to the religious sentiment of the Church of England? Another provision was that in a consecrated chapel any service could be conducted. The right hon. Gentleman had not been sufficiently instructed as to what the Bill really meant. It was idle to suggest that the promoters simply desired to get rid of fees; for as to the way of levying those fees perhaps some Churchmen might desire to see a change as much as any Dissenter. Singularly little had been said, from the Nonconformist point of view, as to these fees; and he should like to know what, exactly, the grievance was, and to see a remedy proposed on broad and general lines, without being mixed up with other questions. There were one or two other points in the Bill which required explanation on the part of Her Majesty's Government. By the first clause of the Bill compulsory powers were given to the Burial Boards for purchasing burial-grounds. He doubted whether such a change in the law ought ever to be initiated without the consent and even the control of the responsible Government of the day. It was really a Home Office clause. All the existing provisions with regard to the closing of burial-grounds and the acquisition of new sites were under the supervision of the Home Office; and a sweeping measure which set aside all the objections of so many people ought to be more carefully considered. The House ought to know on what ground the Government approved this part of the Bill, which effected quite as important a change in the law as any of the minor provisions to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had called attention. Nowadays he should have thought that a change in those Acts, which required that a pauper should receive Christian burial in consecrated ground, would receive some consideration. Why should that provision be set aside? The pauper was not present to speak for himself. The House ought to be careful in interfering with the rights of Christian burial, which the poor valued very highly. There was much more sentiment and feeling on the subject among the poor than might be supposed by those who had not come closely into contact with them. What case had been made out for imposing at the will of Nonconformists privileges which were not considered necessary at the time of the passing of the Act of 1880? What case had been made out for shortening the hours, or for compulsory burial on Good Friday, Christmas Day, and Sunday? On those points no substantial grievance had been felt in any part of the United Kingdom. The hon. Member who introduced the Bill brought nothing before the House to show that a grievance had been felt in this respect. But the right hon. Member for Denbighshire seemed to suggest that there had been in Wales more cases of attempted interference with burials under the Act of 1880 than in other parts of the United Kingdom. That was strangely inconsistent with the answer he gave the other night when he interrupted to show that there had been very little necessity for the Act of 1880 in Wales, because there were so many Nonconformist bodies there who had their own places of burial. At any rate, it was a matter which many on the Conservative side of the House considered was to a large extent settled in 1880. It had, they believed, worked satisfactorily for a period of nearly 15 years. He did not deny that there had been cases which would call for slight alteration of the law if considered sufficiently important to merit the interference of Parliament. It was all very well to conceal under mild expressions and polite manners feelings of antagonism to the Church. When he heard the hon. Member who introduced the Bill say it was not introduced with any feeling of antagonism to the Church, that it was no part of any scheme of the Liberation Society, or connected with the Disestablishment of the Church, he himself thought it very strange, if the Bill was no part of the programme, that they should find such clauses as they had found in it. No one could read these clauses without feeling that they were framed by those who desired to wound and injure the Church of England, to get further rights and privileges to which the previous condition of the law, and previous experience of the law gave them no claim; and he trusted that, if the House should see fit to read this Bill a second time, it would be so amended in Committee that it would only deal with the particular grievances that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had thought fit to take notice of, and that there would be removed from it those aggressive clauses which this Debate had brought out in strong relief, and to which Churchmen were entitled to take exception.

The House divided:—Ayes, 224; Noes 113.—(Division list No. 20.)

Bill read 2°.

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS moved that the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Law.

Objection being taken, the Motion was deferred until To-morrow.

MARKET GARDENERS COMPENSATION BILL.

Colonel C. W. LONG (Worcester, Evesham) moved the Second Reading of this Bill, pointing out that the principle of the measure was accepted by the House last year. He asked the House to allow this Bill, as well as a similar Bill brought in by the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire to be read a second time in order that both Bills might be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Does this Bill extend to Ireland?

COLONEL LONG: No.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Then I object.

MR. CHANNING: That is a point that may be fully considered in the Grand Committeee.

MR. J. COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) appealed to the hon. and learned Member to withdraw his objection to a measure which was urgently required by the market gardeners of England.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the promoters extend the Bill to Ireland?

COLONEL LONG: I have no objection whatever to extend the Bill to Ireland.

Bill read 2°.

COLONEL LONG gave Notice that Tomorrow he would move to refer the Bill to the Grand Committee on Trade.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

MR. C. H. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, Middleton), in asking that the order for the Second Reading might be deferred till that day week, stated that this Bill was brought in some years ago, and passed through the Standing Committee. It was proposed to refer it again to the Standing Committee. The Judges were very favourable to the principle of a Court of Criminal Appeal.

Order deferred accordingly.

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (LANCASHIRE SITTINGS) BILL.

MR. W. H. HOLLAND (Salford, N.) moved the Second Reading of the Bill.

Objection having been taken,

MR. HOLLAND appealed to the hon. Member who objected. He could not be aware of the contents of the Bill. It was promoted by Members in all parts of the House, and was supported by the Chambers of Commerce of Liverpool and Manchester, and the Incorporated Law Associations of Liverpool and Manchester. The principle of the measure was affirmed by the House in 1884 and 1885.

MR. J. T. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich), wished to add that the Bill was supported by the Cheshire and North Wales Incorporated Law Society.

MR. W. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield) said, it was a Bill of enormous importance, which altered the whole procedure of the courts in Lancashire. He must object.

Motion accordingly postponed.

RULES OF THE ROAD AT SEA.

The adjourned Debate on the Amendment proposed to the Motion for a Select Committee was resumed.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the objections which have been raised to the adoption by Order in Council of Rule 15 of the Revised International Regulations for preventing Collisions at sea, dealing with sound signals in fog, as suggested by the Washington Conference, and considered by the Maritime Powers."—*(Sir Donald Currie.)*

Amendment proposed,

"To leave out from the word 'raised,' in line 2, to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'Order in Council of the 30th day of January 1893, relative to the fixing and screening of ships' side-lights, and to the adoption by Order in Council of the sound signals prescribed by Article 15 and Article 28 of the Revised Regulations for preventing Collision at Sea, as set forth in the Board of Trade Circular to Shipowners of 6th March 1894.'"—*(Mr. T. Gibson Bowles.)*

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) now appealed to the President of the Board of Trade not to oppose his Amendment.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said, it was quite impossible for him to accept the Amendment. He assented to the motion for the Committee on the express condition that the Inquiry should be limited to one rule, to which objection was taken. There was no reason for introducing these other matters into the investigation. They would largely increase and delay the work of the Committee. They called for a different kind of knowledge altogether; they would require to be investigated on the seacoast with the aid of experiments, and the whole Inquiry would be more confused than enlightened, by bringing these matters before the Committee.

Debate adjourned.

REPORT OF SUPPLY.

Report of Supply (March 5) brought up and agreed to.

MARKET GARDENERS' COMPENSATION (No. 2) BILL.

Mr. CHANNING moved the Second Reading of the Bill.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, he had had an opportunity of looking through both these Bills, and hoped that when the Irish Land Bill came before the House the Tory Party would be good enough to transfer wholesale the provisions of this Bill which they were now passing with so much unanimity.

Bill read 2°.

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND) (No. 2) BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT moved to report Progress.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Is this all the thanks we get for allowing the Market Gardeners' Bill to pass? This is a Bill to carry out the existing law—to clear up the point as to whether road contractors can be paid half-yearly instead of yearly. It is backed by the Conservative Member for Derry; and an hon. Gentleman who, in all probability, was never in Ireland, is good enough to block it. It will be a lesson to Irish Members never to allow an English Bill to pass again.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) reminded the hon. and learned Member for Louth that this Bill had already been read a second time, and all that was now asked was, that it should stand over for one week, in order that a few Members who took an interest in it might make some inquiries as to its operation.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, that the Grand Juries were sitting at this moment, and there were 30,000 road contractors in Ireland who would be kept out of their money for six months unless this Bill passed. When the Bill was endorsed by so Conservative a man as the Member for Derry, it was certainly a remarkable fact that it should be opposed by some of his friends, who had probably never seen Ireland.

Mr. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT: I move that you report Progress, Sir.

Progress reported.

SMALLER DWELLINGS (SCOTLAND).

Bill to amend the Law in Scotland relating to Smaller Dwellings.—(*Mr. Alexander Cross.*)

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill No. 161.]

MOTIONS.

CUSTOMS BOATMEN.

Mr. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock) desired to move:—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the appointments of boatmen in Customs, to which nominations are now made by the Treasury on the recommendation of Members of Parliament and others, should, in future, be made by the Board of Customs, subject to rules and regulations to be laid down from time to time by the Board of Customs."

Mr. F. G. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) objected.

Mr. LUTTRELL appealed to the hon. Member to withdraw his objection, pointing out that the House gave an unanimous opinion the other day in favour of the abolition of Party patronage in the case of Post Office appointments, and this Resolution only sought to abolish in the case of the appointment of boatmen in Customs.

Mr. BANBURY said, it would probably be quite right to do what the Resolution suggested, but he thought it ought to be brought on at a time when it could be discussed.

Motion postponed.

THE IRISH LAND BILL.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked the Attorney General when hon. Members might expect to get copies of the Irish Land Bill? It had been understood that it would have been out to-day.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. T. Reid, Dumfries): I believe the Bill will be circulated to-morrow.

The House adjourned at Ten minutes to Six o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 7th March 1895.

ST. ANDREW'S UNIVERSITY.

THE LORD STEWARD OF THE HOUSEHOLD (The Marquess of BREADALBANE) brought up the following reply from Her Majesty to the Address voted by their Lordships, relative to the University of St. Andrews:—

> "I have received your Address praying that the reference to the Duncan Burseries in the University of St. Andrews may be omitted from the Schedule to the Ordinance No. 57 (General 19 Regulations as to Bursaries, Scholarships, and Fellowships), made by the Scotch University Commissioners on July 30, 1894. In conformity with your advice I will withhold my assent from that part of the Ordinance to which your Address relates."

EVIDENCE IN CRIMINAL CASES BILL [H.L.]

Bill to amend the Law of Evidence, presented by Lord Halsbury; read 1ª; and to be printed. [No. 32.]

SCHOOL BOARD RATE.

VISCOUNT CROSS presented a petition, which, he said, was of some importance, as it came from the Manchester School Board, to the effect that, in the interests of education and economy, and more especially in the interests of justice and religious freedom, the School Board rate, which was collected from all citizens, without distinction, should be shared in by all alike, and that the benefits of the rate should be enjoyed equally in all schools, whether Board or voluntary schools, suitable arrangements being made for the inspection of voluntary schools as to the secular part of the education given by the representatives of the ratepayers.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.

LORD RIBBLESDALE, in moving that this Bill be read a Second time, said that the Bill was drafted in almost the same words as the Acts of 1880 and 1890, and it bore the same title. There was, however, this difference: that in the Act of 1890 there was a clause giving the Local Government Board the power to carry out the Bill in the event of default on the part of poor law guardians, and that clause was not in this Bill. The object of the Bill was to give the guardians in the poor law unions power to apply to the Local Government Board for a sum of money out of the Local Loans Fund, out of which to make advances to small occupiers and cultivators for the purpose of purchasing seed potatoes in the event of those individuals not being able to find the money owing to the failure of their crops or their own poverty. Summarising the provisions of the Bill his Lordship remarked that it was important to notice that the Local Government Board might nominate persons to satisfy themselves that the land into which the seed potatoes were to be put had been properly prepared, and was ready for sowing; and as an inducement to a cultivator to pay ready money an abatement of one-fifth was to be made in the price of the seed potatoes, which however, were to be sold on terms that would cover the cost including carriage and storage. The Lord Lieutenant had power to postpone the repayment of instalments by guardians, and also to appoint inspectors to see that the conditions on which the loans were made were satisfactorily carried out.

LORD ASHBOURNE said, he did not think their Lordships would have any difficulty in readily assenting to the Motion. Their Lordships were always anxious to deal expeditiously with any measure for the relief of distress. It was obvious that the success of this measure would largely depend upon its careful administration, on seeing that nothing was done to discourage thrift, and that everything was done to ensure caution, care, and economy. He was sure that these objects were present to the minds of the Government, and that they were most anxious to see that the measure should be carefully, wisely, and prudently administered. He noticed that by Clause 8 provision was made for the appointment of officers who, he supposed, would be seed distributors. It was obvious that they would play a great part in the administration of this money. He should like to know from the noble Lord in charge of the Bill how many inspectors it was contemplated to appoint, also what remuneration it was intended to give them; and further, whether there would be any objection to laying on the Table or publishing in the *Dublin Gazette*, or in the Press, the names and previous occupations of those who were selected to fulfil these duties.

Lord RIBBLESDALE said, he quite agreed that the whole efficacy of the Bill would depend upon its careful administration; and he could hardly assume that it would be brought forward at all unless every care were going to be taken that it should be properly administered. As to the specific question asked he was not able to say how many officers would be appointed, and he thought that in this respect the Bill was framed with some latitude so as not unnecessarily to tie the hands of the Irish Office, and to leave them at liberty to appoint as many as might be necessary.

Lord ASHBOURNE said, it was openly stated that a number of inspectors had been already selected, and that their names were known to many people, and that was the reason why he asked the question.

Lord RIBBLESDALE said, he had no personal knowledge that that was so, but he would make a representation to Mr. Morley of what the noble and learned Lord had said.

*Lord ORANMORE AND BROWNE said, he hoped measures would be taken to avoid difficulties which occurred on the occasion of the last distribution of seed potatoes, when no proper lists were kept of those who received them, when some of the seed potatoes were nearly useless from alleged want of care in the carriage, wherefore there was great difficulty in collecting the rates from those who had been supplied.

Bill then read 2^a.

RICHMOND LUNATIC ASYLUM, DUBLIN.

Lord ASHBOURNE: I beg to ask whether there are now in the Richmond Lunatic Asylum, Dublin, nearly 400 inmates in excess of the nominal limits of legitimate accommodation; whether it has been arranged to build a new asylum at Portrame, which will accommodate about half the inmates now at Richmond; if it is under consideration to provide for the residue of the inmates, either by altering and re-constructing the existing asylum, or seeking a new site; what has been the medical history of the existing asylum; is the soil in a healthy state; are the grounds sufficient for the needs of an asylum; and what would be the estimated cost of altering or re-constructing the existing asylum, so as to satisfy modern requirements?

Lord RIBBLESDALE: It is, substantially, as the noble Lord states in his first question. The number of patients at present resident in Richmond Asylum is 1486. There is provision in the permanent buildings for about 1100. Arrangements have been made to provide commodious and suitable temporary buildings for the residue. Portions of these buildings have been completed, and are in occupation, and the remaining portions will be handed over immediately. It has been decided to build a new asylum at Portrane for at least 1,000 patients. This will provide accommodation for about half the insane of the district. It has been decided to re-model, improve, and enlarge the existing buildings at Richmond so as to accommodate the residue of the insane population. Owing to overcrowding, the medical history of the existing asylum has not been favourable. It has been unfavourably reported four times, in 1887, 1888, 1890, and 1891. There is no reason, however, to suppose that the soil is in an unhealthy state, except to a very limited extent in the immediate vicinity of old sewers, and this it is proposed to remedy by execution of suitable works. The grounds are not at present sufficient in extent for the needs of the asylum, but it is contemplated to increase the area by the purchase of additional land. The estimated cost of altering and re-modelling the existing asylum, so as to satisfy modern requirements, is about £60,000.

*The Earl of ERNE said, it was a matter of notoriety that the asylum was built on an extremely unhealthy site, which was saturated with sewage, and he would put it to the Government whether it would not be better and cheaper in the long run to abandon the site altogether, and to build a new asylum on a more healthy site.

House adjourned at Fifteen Minutes to Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 7th March 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

MOTIONS.

LAMBETH WATER (TRANSFER) BILL.

Mr. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said, that amongst the parties concerned it had been agreed that the Motion standing in his name should be withdrawn, and he would then move an Amended Motion which had been agreed to, and which covered all the points of the case. He asked leave to withdraw the following Motion :—

> "That any County Council and any of the London Water Companies be entitled to be heard before the Select Committee on the above Bill on any Petitions praying to be heard by Counsel, presented by them on or before 14th March next, and that such Petitions be referred to the said Committee."

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Mr. J. STUART moved—

> "That any of the London Water Companies, presenting a Petition against the Bill not later than 14th March, praying to be heard by Counsel, Agents, and Witnesses, and the council of any county which includes any part of the Metropolitan water area, presenting a Petition against the Bill not later than 21st March, praying to be heard by Counsel, Agents, and Witnesses, shall be entitled to be heard on such Petition before the Select Committee on the Bill. That any district council or other local authority for any district wholly or in part within the Metropolitan water area, the London Water Companies jointly, and any other person claiming to be affected by the Bill, presenting a Petition against the Bill not later than 21st March, praying to be heard by Counsel, Agents and Witnesses, may be heard on such Petition before the Select Committee on the Bill, if and so far as the Committee shall think fit."

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said, he did not want to oppose in any way the right hon. Gentleman's Motion, but he would point out to the House that it placed the various county councils in a totally different position to that of the local authorities in the metropolitan area and also in London. The county councils had a *locus standi* before this Committee, whereas the local authorities had simply the permission to ask the Committee if they might appear. He should like to know why the local authorities had not an equal right to a *locus standi.*

Mr. J. STUART said, the only local authorities who had petitioned in London would have a *locus standi* at present. Every party who had acted for these local authorities had agreed to the Motion, and the method proposed was the ordinary way in which the business of the House was conducted.

Sir J. BLUNDELL MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich) thought it was very much better to have the matter arranged as was proposed by the Motion, as it would prevent unnecessary Debates.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) asked if the local authorities had agreed to the matter.

Mr. J. STUART said, he could not mention the exact local authorities, but he knew that very much more than half of the local authorities, through their representatives, had agreed to the matter.

Motion agreed to.

SOUTHWARK AND VAUXHALL WATER (TRANSFER) BILL.

Mr. J. STUART asked leave to withdraw the following Motion standing upon the Paper :—

> "That any County Council and any of the London Water Companies be entitled to be heard before the Select Committee on the above Bill on any Petitions praying to be heard by Counsel, presented by them on or before 14th March next, and that such Petitions be referred to the said Committee."

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Mr. J. STUART moved :—

> "That any of the London Water Companies, presenting a Petition against the Bill not later than 14th March, praying to be heard by Counsel, Agents, and Witnesses, and the council of any county which includes any part of the Metropolitan water area, presenting a Petition against the Bill not later than 21st March, praying to be heard by Counsel, Agents, and Witnesses, shall be entitled to be heard on such Petition before the Select Committee on the Bill. That any district council or other local authority for any district wholly or in part within the Metropolitan water area, the London Water

Companies jointly, and any other person claiming to be affected by the Bill, presenting a Petition against the Bill not later than 21st March, praying to be heard by Counsel, Agents, and Witnesses, may be heard on such Petition before the Select Committee on the Bill, if and so far as the Committee shall think fit."

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS.

FITTERS AND SHIPWRIGHTS.

MR. WALTER HAZELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for Leicester, (Mr. H. Broadhurst), I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, whether he is now in a position to inform the House as to the decision of the Government in respect to the appointment of a Committee of experts for the purpose of recommending some rules to deal with the constant recurring differences arising in Her Majesty's dockyards between fitters and shipwrights as to their respective branches of work?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): No, Sir. I am not yet in a position to make any statement, but the matter is engaging our attention.

TUBERCULOSIS.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN: On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin, St. Patrick (Mr. W. Field), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware of the fact that within the period during which the Bovine Tuberculosis Commission has been sitting the fleshers of Belfast have lost over £2000 from confiscation without compensation; whether the medical and scientific experts have arrived at any conclusion; and, whether the present practice will be modified in Belfast until the Report is issued?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Local Government Board are informed by the Sanitary Authority of Belfast, that seizures of carcasses affected with tuberculosis are made under the provisions of Local Acts and because the carcasses appear to be unsound, unwholesome, and unfit for human food. The Local Government Board have no authority to interfere with the local authority in this matter, or to give any directions as suggested at the end of the question.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman had seen the Report of a meeting on the subject; and whether he could hold out any prospect of a remedy?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am sorry to say I have not seen a report of the meeting.

SIR M. W. RIDLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when the Report of the Committee on Tuberculosis may be expected?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central)? I am not able to add anything to the answer I gave to questions on this subject on February 9th, but I trust that the labours of the Commission may soon be concluded.

THE GREENWICH AGE PENSIONS.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty if he will explain why Naval pensioners who have reached the age of 55 have not received their augmentation, which they were led to expect, on leaving the service?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: The number of Greenwich age pensions which can be in force at one time is governed by the amount of money at the disposal of the Admiralty for that purpose. There is not sufficient to give an age pension to every man at the age of 55, although 10,100 of such pensions are being drawn, at a cost of £100,000 a year. I must demur to the hon. Member's statement that the men were led to expect that every one of them should receive the age pension at 55.

THE KILLYBEGS PIER.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN: On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin, St. Patrick's (Mr. W. Field): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware of the fact that, with a view to develope the fishing industry of the north-west coast of Ireland, the Great Northern Railway Company, along with the Donegal Company, brought over a number of English and Scotch fish buyers who promised to send over boats if the Killybegs Pier was erected; and, whether he will now advise the Government to make the necessary expenditure upon this undertaking?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The facts appear to be substantially as stated in the first paragraph. With regard to the question of the erection of a pier at Killybegs, I have nothing to add to my reply to a similar inquiry which was addressed to me on the 21st February by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Donegal.

THE DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.

Mr. J. H. ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether he will state whether he has received a Resolution passed by the Local Government Committee of the County Council of Denbighshire, in favour of the formation of a rural district council for sanitary and highway purposes, known as the Llansilin District Council; and, whether, as the ratepayers in the locality are strongly in favour of the proposed new district council, he will make an order for such a district?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Local Government Board have not received a copy of any such Resolution as that referred to in the question. I may remind my hon. Friend that the Local Government Board are not themselves empowered to alter a rural district. This is a matter to be dealt with by the County Council, subject to an appeal to the Board.

THE BRITISH DOLLAR IN THE COLONIES.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether any modification of the policy of the Government in regard to the proposal for the minting of a British dollar at Bombay, suggested by the hon. Member for Canterbury in the House of Commons on the 15th December, 1893, has been made; and, whether the Government statement on that occasion, that the idea of a British dollar does not appear to have found much favour in the Straits Settlements, and at Hong Kong it has been abandoned, is still adhered to?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): There has been some variation of opinion in the Colonies on this subject. The idea of coining a British dollar, after being dropped in Hong Kong at the end of 1893, was revived last year, and Her Majesty's Government have now approved the proposal. Arrangements have been made for issuing the new dollar from the Indian mint for circulation in the Straits Settlements, Hong Kong, Labuan, and North Borneo concurrently with the Mexican dollar. I may add that the question of the coinage of a British dollar has for some years engaged the attention of the Goverment. but until the Indian Government last year signified their willingness to coin at a uniform rate of 1 per cent. the scheme appeared impracticable.

BRITISH SUBJECTS IN THE BOER REPUBLIC.

Mr. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in the month of January last, a Boer field cornet, of the name of Bodenstein, expelled the representatives of the trading firm of Messrs. E. Harvey from thet own of Krugersdorp; whether the ground of such expulsion was stated to be that the persons expelled were Asiatics; whether the persons expelled were British subjects; and whether the law of the Boer Republic permits the forcible expulsion of British subjects on no other ground than that of their nationality?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: We have not received any information nor complaint in regard to the subject of the alleged expulsion of the representatives of Messrs. Harvey and Co. from Krudersdorp.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: May I ask whether the hon. Member will answer the last portion of my question?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have said that we have received no information or complaint. If we receive any complaint we will carefully look into it.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Does the Boer law permit of acts of this kind?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am afraid I cannot say, but an arbitration is just about to proceed, and we shall probably receive more information in regard to the subject.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Will the hon. Gentleman make inquiry into the matter?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: If we receive a definite complaint, of course inquiry will be made.

IMPORTED MEAT.

MR. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether his attention has been drawn to the statement of *The Times'* correspondent of 4th March, giving details concerning the preparation and packing of diseased meat at Chicago for export to England; whether he has reason to believe (as stated in *The Times*) that, although a bullock at Chicago may be condemned as diseased and unfit for food, yet its tongue is preserved and exported, whilst the fat is made into oleo-margarine; whether it is a fact that in many instances the diseased meat which has been condemned is, nevertheless, taken out of the condemned tanks after the inspector has left, and is then preserved and exported to England; and, whether he will endeavour to prevent such meat being used in England as food?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HERBERT GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): I have read the statement to which my hon. Friend refers, and I propose to make inquiry through the Foreign Office respecting it, and as to the arrangements in force in the United States for the prevention of the exportation of meat unfit for human food. The prevention of the sale of such meat in this country rests with the sanitary authorities, acting in execution of the powers conferred upon them by the Public Health Act. Those authorities are not in any way subject to the control of the Board of Agriculture, but I shall be very glad to bring under the notice of my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board any information which may reach me as to the existence of danger to human health arising from imported food-products.

MR. T. D. SULLIVAN (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, previous to the slaughter in Australia and other places of sheep and cattle whose flesh is converted into frozen meat and sent to this Country for human food, they are examined by competent inspectors, with a view to ensure that no animals suffering from disease shall be used for that purpose?

*MR. HERBERT GARDNER: I am not in possession of any official information on the subject to which my hon. Friend refers, the protection of the public health, which presumably is the object my hon. Friend has in view, not being a matter which falls within the province of the Board of Agriculture. I shall, however, be happy to make enquiry through the Foreign and Colonial Offices as to the arrangements in force in the various countries and colonies from which frozen meat is exported, for the prevention of the exportation of meat unfit for human food, and to acquaint my hon. Friend with the replies received. So far as the health of live stock is concerned, there is no reason to think that any danger attends the importation of frozen meat into the United Kingdom.

MR. A. F. JEFFREYS: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he received in April last a copy of the unanimous resolution passed by the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture, asking him to give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Marking of Foreign Meat; and whether he is now prepared to introduce a Bill carrying out those recommendations for the purpose of registering dealers in foreign and colonial meat, and of inspecting retail butchers' shops under the Food and Drugs Act by duly qualified Inspectors?

*MR. HERBERT GARDNER: I duly received a copy of the resolution to which the hon. Member refers. Since the Select Committee sat, we have passed the Merchandise Marks (Prosecutions) Act, and until it has been shown that the law as it now stands is insufficient to deal with the evil complained of, I think it would be premature to propose further legislation on the subject. As the hon. Member is aware, I have recently taken steps to make the provisions of the Act of last Session very widely known in agricultural circles.

WINDOW CLEANING.

MR. J. A. M. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the 28th Section of the Towns Police Clauses Act, 1847, which prohibits any person standing on the sill of of any window in order to clean, paint, or perform any other operation upon the outside of such window, applies to London; and, if not, whether any similar prohibition exists applicable to London?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): No, it does not apply to London, neither is there at at present any similar prohibition with regard to the Metropolis, but I hope it may be made applicable whenever the Metropolitan Police Acts may be amended.

THE FROST AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, in view of the serious loss which many schools must otherwise suffer in consequence of severe weather in calculating their aver age attendance, he will in the new code arrange that such schools should be allowed to omit from the calculation of the average attendance such a number of the meetings, with their attendances, as will secure such schools against any loss due to the severity of the weather?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W. R., Rotherham): I have given directions by a Circular to the inspectors that special allowance is to be made for the recent exceptionally severe weather, in their assessment of the grants and their judgment of the efficiency of schools shortly to be inspected. I am afraid I cannot undertake to go further. To allow schools to count only the best-attended meetings in calculating their average attendance would place the scale of grants on a new footing, and add seriously to the burden on the Exechequer.

MR. E. F. VESEY KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of inspectors has yet been called to the desirability of leniency in examining schools, owing to the recent severe weather; and, if so, what was the date of the National Board's circular; and whether he will say what are the objections to including among the rules of the National Board a rule similar to rule 101 in the English code, giving to schools where the average attendance has been greatly reduced by the prevalence of an epidemic, or other exceptional cause of the like nature, a special grant making up the loss in the ordinary grant?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am inquiring further into this matter, and perhaps my hon. and learned Friend will repeat the question next Thursday.

THE NEW CODE.

*SIR F. S. POWELL: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will make more clear in the text of the Code that Schedule 7 does not apply to schools which have been already approved by the Department, or the plans for which have been passed, but only to new schools; and whether he will also secure further modification of Section 7 in the same schedule, with a view of not recommending so large a number of class rooms in all cases?

MR. ACLAND: If the hon. Baronet will refer to Article 85 (a) of the Code, he will see that it is there explicitly stated that the rules of Schedule 7 apply to new schools and enlargements, and this statement is repeated at the head of the schedule itself. I do not see how this can be made more clear, but I shall be glad to consider any suggestion which the hon. Baronet may make to me. As regards the paragraph in the schedule as to the number of class rooms, this is not a compulsory requirement, but a practical suggestion meant for the help and guidance of local managers and architects. The consulting architect of the Department recommended its insertion on the ground that he knew from experience that managers often needed help in these details of planning. Classes, of course, means classes under separate teachers.

DINGLE PIER, COUNTY KERRY.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what decision has been come to by the Congested Districts Board upon the subject of improving the landing-place at Dingle, county Kerry?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the consideration of the subject of improving the landing place has been postponed for the present by the Congested Districts Board.

LOANS TO IRISH TENANTS.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury (1) whether a tenant in Ireland, whose valuation is £12 or under, is unable to obtain a loan from the Board of Works for the improvement of his farm; and (2) whether with a view to encouraging the smaller occupiers to improve their holdings, it would be possible to revert to the rule under which a tenant could obtain a loan to the amount of five times his poor-law valuation, or else to make it possible for tenant occupiers to obtain a smaller loan than the present minimum of £35?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir J. T. Hibbert, Oldham): The statement in the first paragraph of my honourable Friend's question is substantially correct. The risk, expense and loss under this class of loans are at present very serious, partly owing to defects in the legal process of recovery as interpreted by judicial decisions. Until this state of things is remedied, I do not think it would be right to extend the scope of these loans. My honourable Friend may perhaps recollect the failure of the attempt of the late Government to put the security on a more satisfactory basis.

SWINE FEVER.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to a resolution of the Athlone Board of Guardians protesting against the assessment on the union of the sum of £184 9s. 4d. for the expenses of the Board in Dublin under the provisions of the Prevention of the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894, over and above the local expenditure under the Act, as it was not apparent that the disease had been materially checked by this expensive administration; and whether he will have the question of this extraordinary expenditure reconsidered with a view to its reduction.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have been furnished with a copy of the resolution referred to. The assessment complained of was levied off the various Poor Law Unions in proportion to the net annual value of the property in each union, and was rendered necessary by the efforts that are being made to deal effectually with swine fever in Ireland. I am advised that there is no power to alter the amount of the assessment in the case of any particular union.

Sir T. ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Local Government Board have received complaints of the operation of the swine fever regulations in Gorey Union; what number of swine have been slaughtered, and what number of cases reported there within the past six months; and what have been the fees of the veterinary surgeon, and the total cost to the rates in this union since the Act was passed?

Mr. J. MORLEY: No recent complaints have reached the Veterinary Department of the operations of the swine fever regulations in this Union. During the six months ended 23rd February, 1895, 302 pigs were slaughtered in the Union. Ninety-four cases of supposed swine fever were reported by owners during that period, and in 80 of these the animals were slaughtered by the veterinary inspectors of the local authority as diseased or suspected of disease. The fees paid to the two inspectors in the Union since the passing of the Act in November, 1893, amount to £270. The funds voted by Parliament for the current financial year sufficed to meet the expenditure till the close of the year 1894, and in December an assessment at the rate of ½d. in the 1 was made on the various Poor Law Unions for the purposes of the General Cattle Diseases Fund. The amount assessed on Gorey Union was £167 16s. 6d.

CONSUMPTION OF SPIRITS IN WEST AFRICA.

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if his attention has been called to a statement in the *Times* of 4th March that in the English colony of Lagos alone, 2,000,000 gallons of spirits go in every year for native consumption, and in the neighbouring colony of Oil Rivers, known now as the Niger Protectorate, 2,000,000 gallons more go in also every year; and what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking, or propose to take, to secure uniformity of action throughout the various West African Colonies, with a view to either prohibit the sale of spirits or place high restrictive duties upon their importation?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: My attention has been drawn to the article in question. I fear that so long as other countries have contiguous possessions through which spirits can be imported it is impossible for us to suppress the traffic. We already levy in our colonies duties on spirits generally in excess of those imposed in the neighbouring French and German colonies, and also higher than the tariff laid down in the Act of the Brussels Conference.

MR. J. A. PEASE asked whether the hon. Gentleman would negotiate with the other Powers with a view to the adoption of a uniform system?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said they had endeavoured more than once to do that, but at the present moment there was very little prospect of an agreement being arrived at.

CIVIL BILL COURTS, COUNTY CAVAN.

MR. S. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that, the county of Cavan being divided into two Civil Bill Divisions, the entire equity business of the county is required by the existing arrangements to be transacted at Cavan, causing inconvenience and loss to persons in the Cootehill Civil Bill Division by requiring them and their witnesses to travel long distances to Cavan to the several equity sittings both before the Judge and the Registrar; (2) whether there is any reason why the equity business arising in the Cootehill Civil Bill District could not be transacted at Cootehill in the same manner as the ordinary Civil Bill business for the district, and will a representation be made in the proper quarter to have the necessary change made; (3) could he explain why the Crown business arising in the Cootehill Civil Bill District is all brought to Cavan instead of being disposed of at Cootehill, occasioning inconvenience and loss of time to magistrates, grand jurors, and jurors, and the public generally living in the Cootehill Civil Bill Division; (4) and whether, if a memorial be influentially signed and presented to the Lord Lieutenant by the people of the Cootehill Division praying for the necessary changes, the Lord Lieutenant will favourably consider the matter?

MR. J. MORLEY: In reply to paragraphs (1) and (2), I am informed that the equity business of the county is carried on at Cavan in accordance with an Order in Council dated the 11th February, 1878, made to suit the convenience of suitors, and that the arrangement does not, so I am advised, cause the inconvenience and loss mentioned in the question. In reply to paragraph (3), I am informed that the Crown business of the County is carried on at Cavan in accordance with an Order in Council dated the 4th October, 1876, made to suit the convenience of jurors and the public generally. In reply to paragraph (4), such a memorial as is suggested in the question would of course receive the consideration of the Lord Lieutenant.

METALLIFEROUS MINES.

MR. D. AINSWORTH (Cumberland, Egremont): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he proposes, and if so when, to introduce a Bill to amend the Metalliferous Mines Acts?

MR. ASQUITH: I am not without hope of being able to introduce this Bill, but I cannot at the present moment give a definite pledge.

THE FALLS OF FOYERS.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether his attention has been drawn to the statement that it is proposed by a public company to destroy the Falls of Foyers on Loch Ness; and, if so, will he take prompt measures to prevent the destruction of what is of national interest, especially to tourists?

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness) wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman, as these Falls were in his constituency, whether there were not two sides to the question? Whilst he should deprecate the destruction of such grand and beautiful Falls just as much as anybody else would, he could not help asking the right hon. Gentleman to consider whether, especially as public works and factories were so scarce in this part of Scotland, it was more desirable to encourage work of this kind than to discourage it, so that some employment might be found for the people in the locality?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): My hon. Friend has given me a serious problem to solve, but it is one which lies rather with the County Council than with me. I am afraid, however, that the County Council have not yet met to consider the question referred to; but a meeting of the County Road Board, preparatory to holding a meeting of the Council, is called for Friday next to consider whether the Aluminium Company can be allowed to submerge roads near Foyers in carrying out their proposed works. The Company deny that the Falls will be destroyed, but the volume of water will no doubt be lessened at certain seasons of the year. The question, however, is receiving the attention of the County Council, who are, it appears to me, the proper authorities to deal with the matter.

COCOA FOR THE ROYAL NAVY.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether the seamen of Her Majesty's Fleet are supplied with two kinds of cocoa, manufactured by the Admiralty at Deptford, neither of which are pure according to the strict legal interpretation of the word; whether the cocoa issued for breakfast is compounded of 20 to 25 per cent. of sugar and 80 per cent. of cocoa; whether the cocoa issued in bad weather in middle watch, at option of commanding officer, and called "optional cocoa," is compounded of 25 per cent. of sugar, 25 per cent. of sago flour, and 50 per cent. of cocoa, in order to make it soluble in boiling water; if these figures are not correct, will he please give the correct percentages of sugar and starch and cocoa used in the manufacture of what is considered of excellent quality as a ration for the Fleet, and as such approved by the medical department of the Navy; and, at what price per pound, free of duty, is Admiralty cocoa supplied to the War Department when required for issue to troops?

*MR. E. ROBERTSON: Cocoa is no issued in the Navy, but two kinds of chocolate are issued: (1) the ordinary, consisting of 16 per cent. of sugar and 84 per cent. of cocoa nibs (pure); (2) soluble, consisting of 18 per cent. of sugar, 18 per cent. of sago flour or arrowroot, and 64 per cent. of cocoa nibs (pure), the last being so mixed in order to allow of its being quickly prepared for use. Ordinary chocolate only is supplied to the War Office by the Admiralty for use in military prisons, and is charged for at rate book prices—namely 64s. 5d. per 100 lbs., plus 5 per cent.

THE LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) ACT, 1891.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can say approximately what is the total interest of all the counties in Ireland in the Land Purchase Guarantee Fund, within the meaning of Section 9 of The Land Purchase (Ireland) Act, 1891, taking as the basis of his calculation the Estimates for 1894–5; and what, according to this calculation, is the total balance available for advance under the Act?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: In round figures, the approximate estimate of the total sum which may still be advanced under the Purchase Act of 1891, on the basis of the present figures of the Guarantee Fund, may be put at £30,000,000. This sum is arrived at after making allowance for the amount of stock issued up to date—namely, £1,600,000.

TROUBLES AT BRASS.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the many important British interests connected with that part of Africa, he can now state what is to be the precise scope of the proposed Inquiry into the recent troubles in the Brass neighbourhood, and by whom will the Inquiry be conducted?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The Inquiry will be made to ascertain what were the causes and character of the attack on the British Settlements; in what manner the natives became, in contravention of the Brussels Act, possessed of guns and arms of precision; what has been the cause and what the extent of the loss by the natives of legitimate trade; and whether measures can be taken for improving their position when peace is definitely restored. The person who will conduct the Inquiry has not been selected.

PARISH ANNUAL MEETINGS.

MR. A. F. JEFFREYS: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether there is any necessity for a parish which has a Parish Council, to hold an annual assembly on or about the 25th day of March this year; whether, if the annual assembly were held, there would be any statutory business to transact; and, whether overseers and, if necessary, assistant overseers, are to be appointed at the meeting of the Parish Council on or about the 15th day of April next?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: The Local Government Act, 1894, requires that an annual assembly of the parish meeting shall be held in each year in every rural parish, on March 29, or within seven days before or after that day, although the parish may have a Parish Council. The Act does not prescribe the business to be transacted at the meeting; but it will be competent for the meeting to discuss parish affairs, and to pass resolutions thereon. Overseers and, where necessary, assistant overseers, should be appointed at the annual meeting of the Parish Council, to be held on April 15 next, or within 15 days afterwards.

MR. JEFFREYS said, the right hon. Gentleman had not answered the second part of his Question, namely, whether there would be any statutory business to transact this year?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE said, that was a matter for the assistant overseers.

SCHOOL GRANTS TO SCOTCH PARISHES.

MR. T. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, inasmuch as extra School grants are given to Highland parishes which have largely reduced the local rates, one half of which reduction goes directly to the landlord, and the greater portion of the other half to the deer forest and other large tenants, he will make it a condition of such extra school grants in future that the Local Authorities provide suitable footpaths, to enable the children to attend the schools in safety and with comfort?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: The additional assistance granted to certain insular parishes in the Highlands, to which the hon. Member refers, is paid to School Boards for educational purposes, and I have no authority to make any condition about it, other than of an educational character. The Government are very desirous that the children in the Highlands should have facilities for attending schools, and that is one of the reasons which has induced them, in the County Government Bill of this Session, to introduce provisions empowering Local Authorities to make footpaths.

SWAZILAND.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he can state when he can distribute to Members further Correspondence relating to the Swaziland settlement; and, whether it will be possible to append to the Correspondence, for convenience of reference, copies of all five conventions and agreements which have been made with the Transvaal State or South African Republic which affect our relations with Swaziland?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I hope the Papers will be distributed to-morrow; they were laid some time ago. It had already struck me that it would be a convenience to Members to have the five conventions printed together; and we had, therefore, some time ago, arranged that they should appear as an appendix to the new Blue Book, together with two or three other papers, which will be useful for reference.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD.

MR. C. J. DARLING (Deptford): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, whether the Admiralty have refused to allow Captain Lord Charles Beresford to count as service time 315 days during which he was borne on the books of the flagship at Alexandria for service on Lord Wolseley's Staff in the Nile Expedition, or in command of the Naval Brigade; whether any, and if so how many, Naval Officers junior to Lord Charles Beresford have been allowed to count this as sea time; whether there are any precedents for allowing Lord Charles Beresford to count this time; and, will the effect of refusing Lord Charles Beresford leave to count this time possibly be to compel him to leave the Service without having attained flag rank?

SIR J. E. GORST (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, whether it is true the 315 days during which Lord Charles Beresford was in command of a Naval force in the Soudan Expedition are not counted by the Admiralty as active service; whether, if the same period had been spent in command of a harbour ship, it would have been counted as active service; and, whether the Admiralty will establish a precedent whereby war service of an important and distinguished character, when performed by a Naval Officer, may be reckoned as active service in Her Majesty's Navy?

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, if he will explain why Captain Lord Charles Beresford, R.N., has, contrary to the usual practice in such cases, neither been appointed Aide-de-Camp to the Queen nor given a good service pension, and also that, while his junior officers have been allowed to count as service time the time they spent in the Nile Campaign undertaken for the rescue of General Gordon, he has been refused permission so to count the time he spent in that campaign; whether the Admiralty have consulted and received any advice from Naval or Military Officers of superior rank, and especially from Lord Wolseley, with regard to this matter; and, whether he can inform the House what reasons, if any, exist for thus passing over and refusing time to Lord Charles Beresford?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The usual practice has not been departed from in regard to Lord Charles Beresford's claims to the two appointments referred to in the question of the hon. Member for Lynn. With regard to the appointment of Aide-de-Camp to the Queen, the First Lord asks me to say that he must decline to give reasons for his submitting or not submitting names of Officers for a personal appointment by Her Majesty. It would be manifestly prejudicial to the interests of the service for an officer to assume that he has a right to receive such an appointment. The Good Service Pension to Captains on the Active List, has in practice, been awarded by seniority to Officers (not being Aides-de-Camp) who have had a certain number of years' service. It is thus not given to distinguished, as distinct from long service. Of the five Captains, junior to Lord Charles Beresford, who have received the Good Service Pension, the Officer with the least service has four-and-a-half more years' service, and the one with the longest service has ten more years' service than Lord Charles. Lord Charles would undoubtedly have received the Good Service Pension, had he served for the usual qualifying time. In regard to whether the Admiralty have refused to allow Lord Charles Beresford to count as service the 315 days when he was on Lord Wolseley's staff, I have to say that the Board of Admiralty of the late Government decided that Lord Charles' service in Egypt, viz.: 53 days in command of the Naval Brigade, and 262 days on the staff, should count as sea-service, but not as service in command of a ship of war at sea. Sea-service allowed by the Regulation reckons for all purposes, but in the case of Captains it must be combined with certain service in command of a ship of war at sea in order to count for promotion. It is an essential rule, and one to which the Admiralty attach great importance for the efficiency of the service—that a Captain should serve the first three years of his qualifying sea-service in command of a ship of war at sea. Service during this period in command of a harbour ship would not count for this purpose. The only Officer serving in Egypt, of the same rank but junior to Lord Charles Beresford, and to whom these regulations apply, viz.: Captain Boardman, was refused by the Board of Admiralty of the late Government, to count this service as that in a ship of war at sea.

Lord Charles Beresford will be able to qualify for flag rank by serving in his present appointment until the 11th March, 1896. It is not, however, possible to say the exact time when Lord Charles will attain flag rank, as it depends upon seniority and certain contingencies which cannot be foreseen; but it will probably not be for a considerable time after having completed his qualifying service. The present Board decided, and so informed Lord Charles Beresford, that if for any unavoidable cause beyond his own control he is rendered unable to complete the qualifying service, the Admiralty will reconsider his case, so that the services of this gallant officer should not be lost to the Navy and the State. The Board of Admiralty see no reason to consult Naval and Military officers on matters relating to the administration of Her Majesty's Navy, for which they are responsible. They are not prepared to alter the existing Regulations. This refusal to allow Lord Charles Beresford to count this time in Egypt as in command of a ship of war at sea affects neither his seniority, his pay, or his retirement. It simply means that the Admiralty expect Lord Charles to continue serving until he has completed the minimum service required by the Regulations to qualify for the high position of British Admiral, a minimum which few officers are content not to greatly exceed.

Sir J. GORST: May I be allowed to say that I put my question on the paper neither at Lord Charles Beresford's request nor in his interest; but it is my intention on the Naval Estimates to call attention to the Regulations?

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: May I say that I have received no communication from Lord Charles Beresford? I put the question down entirely in consequence of what I saw in the public Press.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

Mr. E. F. VESEY-KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he can now say whether he will be able to start relief works, and especially to make some much needed roads, to relieve the distress in Glengelvin and Killinagh parishes, County Cavan?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board's Inspector has visited the districts referred to in the question, and made careful inquiry as to the condition of the people there. There appears to be no doubt that a number of families in these localities are very poor, compared with other parts of the union, and have suffered from the failure of the potato crop; but as the Enniskillen union is very well circumstanced, with a high valuation per head of population, and as the poor rates are very low, and the numbers on relief are normal, the Board do not consider that for the present at all events any necessity exists for adopting exceptional measures of relief.

TEACHERS' SUPERANNUATION.

Mr. T. R. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether, in the event of the Teachers' Superannuation Scheme recommended by the Departmental Committee for England being adopted, a similar scheme of superannuation will be instituted for the teachers of Scotland.

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: On p. 18 of the Report of the Departmental Committee the hon. Member will find a reference to Scotland, which is differently situated from England in regard to the matter. But I have made representations to the Treasury in regard to the financial claim which might arise for Scotland, in the event of a system of pensions being established for England from Imperial funds.

THE BARROW DEEPS.

Major RASCH: I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, whether dredgings from Sheerness are still being deposited in the estuary of the Thames or in the Barrow Deeps?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: All dredgings from Sheerness and Chatham are being deposited in the Barrow Deeps.

THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

Mr. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether the scheme which has recently been applied to the clerical staff of the Accountant General's Department will be extended to all the other Departments of the Admiralty, and at what date; and, whether the promotions to be made will be antedated so as to rank with those recently given ?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON : It is intended to fix an establishment for each Department under the Admiralty, and the scheme lately applied to the Accountant General's Deparment will be accepted as a model. The needs of each Department have been received and are being considered, and, later on, a fixed normal Establishment will be submitted to the Treasury. The date cannot exactly be fixed, but it may be assumed that a settlement will be arrived at very shortly. Should any advantages accrue to individual members of the staff, the date from which such advantages will accrue will be a matter for consideration. It is very doubtful, however, whether any benefits will be antedated.

IRISH LABOURERS' COTTAGES.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) Whether he is aware that Thomas Briceland, labourer, of Feddyglas, in the union of Strabane, made due application for a cottage under the Labourers Acts, and attended the investigation held by the Local Government Board's Inspector at Strabane ; (2) Whether he has since forwarded to the Local Government Board a notice to quit, served on him by the landlord in consequence of his application ; and (3) whether the Local Government Board will direct their Inspector to deal with the case promptly, so that the man may not lose his claim by being compelled to leave the district for want of a habitation ?

MR. J. MORLEY : The reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. It is also the fact that this man was served with a notice to quit, and the Local Government Board's Inspector states, that when the man made application for a cottage under the Labourers Acts, he had a very good house with five or six rooms in it, together with a small plot of ground. The Inspector, when making a scheme, will have regard to the general requirements of the district.

MR. A. O'CONNOR : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that Peter M'Brearty filled a representation form under the Labourers Acts, and attended the Inspector's inquiry at Strabane, and that the Inspector condemned the man's house as unfit for habitation ; whether he is aware that the house has since been nearly destroyed by a storm ; and, whether the Inspector will be authorised to make provision for the case ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I regret to have to ask my hon. and learned Friend to postpone this question until Monday.

MR. J. J. CLANCY (Dublin, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, can he state what is the reason of the long delay that has occurred in holding the usual Local Government Board inquiry as to the propriety of a scheme for the erection of labourers' cottages in the vicinity of Kells, county of Meath ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I am informed by the Local Government Board that the inquiry in this case has already been fixed for the 18th instant, and that notice to this effect has been publicly given. The date fixed was the earliest the Board could fix, having regard to the other engagements of their Inspectors.

SCOTCH MINES INSPECTION.

MR. J. H. C. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can now see his way to increase the number of Inspectors of Mines for Scotland ; and, whether he will take care that the appointments in Scotland shall be given to Scotsmen ?

MR. ASQUITH : I should be glad, in view of the heavy and constantly growing burdens which are laid upon the Inspectors by the Legislature and by public opinion, to see the staff increased in numbers, both in Scotland and elsewhere. I fear, however, that I shall not be able to make any further additions to it during the coming financial year. I cannot assent to the assumption which appears to underlie the second question, that appointments in each of the countries which make up the United Kingdom should be confined to natives of that country. There is no part of the Empire which would suffer more from a logical and rigorous application of that principle than Scotland.

DR. MACGREGOR asked, were they to assume that Scotchmen were incapable ?

ARMENIA.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he will inquire of Her Majesty's Consul General at Erzeroum if it is possible for a courier to go from Moush to Kars at this season in three days (72 hours).

*Mr. F. S. STEVENSON : May I ask whether the Under-Secretary is aware that the distance from Mush to Kars, via Kagisvan, is only 155 miles, via Alashgert and Khinis only 145 miles; that there are other ways even shorter ; and that the journey has been often performed, even in winter, in less than three days?

*Sir EDWARD GREY : The particular point raised by the hon. Member is hardly one for a separate official inquiry. The reports published in the *Daily Telegraph*, will be referred, through Her Majesty's Embassy, to the Delegate on the spot, in order that the whole question of their accuracy or credibility may be considered there.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT : Arising out of the hon. Baronet's answer' may I ask whether he is aware that the country between Moush and Kars, is exceedingly difficult ; that the roads are exercable, and at this season blocked with snow ; and that travelling by night is impossible ?

*Sir EDWARD GREY : I have no knowledge of the conditions of the journey between Moush and Kars.

*Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether the despach contained in the *Daily Telegraph* of 5th March, from its correspondent at Moush, will be brought to the notice of the British Ambassador at Constantinople, and of the European Delegates attending the Sasun Commission of Inquiry ; and what steps are being taken, in view of the imminent danger of massacre at Bitlis and at other places mentioned, for the purpose of ensuring the safety of the Christian population ?

*Sir EDWARD GREY : The report in question will be sent, like the previous one, to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, for communication to the British Delagate on the Commission. Her Majesty's Ambassador is in constant communication with his French and Russian colleagues and will take such action as may be necessary and possible in concert with them, for ensuring the safety of the Christian population.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT : Will the hon. Member make specific inquiries as to the accuracy of the dates ?

*Sir EDWARD GREY : I think it would be impossible for the Delegates to take into account the accuracy or otherwise of the reports without going into the question of where they were written. The reports are being referred to the Delegates through Her Majesty's Ambassador, and one of the points to be taken notice of is where the reports are, or have been, written.

CHRISTIANS IN TURKEY.

Mr. HERBERT PAUL (Edinburgh, S.) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, considering that the Turkish Commission of Inquiry in the Sassoun District of Armenia is a purely local one, and that grave anxiety is felt concerning the fate of Christian prisoners in Turkish prisons, Her Majesty's Government will propose to the Powers who signed the Treaty of Berlin the appointment of International Consular Commissioners to secure the safety and ultimate release of the Christians now confined in Turkish gaols without satisfactory proof of their guilt ?

*Sir EDWARD GREY : I can only repeat my reply on the 21st ult. to the hon. Member for the Tyneside Division of Northumberland. Any cases which appear to deserve consideration will receive the attention of Her Majesty's Embassy at Constantinople, but in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government it would not be expedient to make proposals under present circumstances for joint international action of the nature described.

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTION RECOUNTS.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that, at the recent London County Council Elections, after the first counting of the votes in North and South St. Pancras and Central Finsbury, recounts were called for, which on each occasion showed a grave divergence from the figures previously arrived at; and whether he proposes to introduce a measure to amend the law in the direction of providing further safeguards for the proper counting of the votes at elections?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I have observed from the reports in the Press that the votes at the election of County Councillors in Central Finsbury were counted twice; but I have no other information on the subject. The difference in the numbers at the two countings does not appear in this instance to have exceeded 16 in the case of any candidate, although nearly 9,000 votes were polled. It appears to me that the possibility of a recount is a sufficient and the only remedy for errors in the previous count.

DEPTFORD VICTUALLING YARD.

MR. C. J. DARLING: I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether it is the intention of the Admiralty to discharge any, and, if so, how many, labourers now employed in Deptford Victualling Yard; whether some of these men have 13 years' service, and would shortly become entitled to a bonus or pension; and whether they will lose this on their present dismissal.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: No discharges properly so called are contemplated at Deptford. Certain retirements take place from time to time under the rules of the Admiralty Service.

FAIRVIEW POST OFFICE, COUNTY DUBLIN.

Mr. J. J. CLANCY: I beg to ask the Postmaster General, will he explain why he has refused to extend the business of the post office at Fairview, County of Dublin, in the manner suggested to him some time since by the ratepayers of the locality?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): I understand that the suggestion alluded to was that a new Branch Post Office, to be erected in front of the Postmen's Sorting Office and to be worked by an Established Staff, should be substituted for the Sub Post Office at Fairview. At present the amount of the Post Office business at Fairview is too small to warrant me complying with the suggestion.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

*MR. HARRY S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education if he will state upon what clause or clauses in the Education Act of 1870 is based the practice of the department in always refusing to recognise additional school accommodation in any voluntary school in a school board area without the support of the school board of that district; and whether, in view of the strong and unanimous opinion of the Royal Commission on Education and the strong desire of the supporters of voluntary schools, he will consider the advisability of endeavouring to alter the law on the subject?

*MR. ACLAND: The law on this matter is contained in Clauses 18 and 98 of the Elementary Education Act of 1870. The Government are not prepared to introduce legislation with a view of amending the Act of 1870 in regard to these matters. It should be borne in mind that no proposal in this sense was made by the late Government during the four years after the Royal Commission reported.

ROYAL ENGINEER OFFICERS.

*MR. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has any objection to state the number of Officers of the Royal Engineers who would be required for military purposes in the event of the mobilisation of the whole Indian Army?

*SIR EDWARD GREY, answering in the absence of Mr. H. H. FOWLER, said: The Secretary of State for India does not consider it would be desirable in the public interests to state the number of officers required on the mobilisation of the army in India.

MILITARY WORKS.

*MR. TALBOT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will agree to the motion for a copy of the Report of the Committee on Military Works and Public Works Department, which stands on this day's paper?

*SIR EDWARD GREY: Neither the Report of the Committee referred to in the hon. Member's motion which stands on this day's paper, nor the evidence taken before that Committee have yet been received. The Secretary of State is, therefore, unable to agree to the motion.

COUNTY COUNCIL LADY VOTERS.

MR. JOHN AIRD (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will have a return prepared giving the number of ladies who have exercised their power of voting at the recent County Council Election?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I presume that the question refers to the recent election of the County Councillors in London, and I have communicated on the subject with the Clerk to the London County Council, who has the custody of the documents from which alone the information desired could be obtained. He informs me that the copies of the register are sealed up with the other papers connected with the ballot, and the packets can only be opened in accordance with the regulations of the Council under the Ballot Act, and that there would be very great practical difficulty in making such a return.

SKYE STEAMBOAT SERVICE.

DR. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he has received a memorial from the inhabitants of the districts of Staffin and Kilmaluag in Skye, praying that the steamboat service hitherto available should not be discontinued; and, whether he can give assurances to that effect?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: I have received the memorial in question and am making some inquiry in reference thereto. The contract provides for a call at both places, and the Contractor will be required to observe the obligation during the continuance of the contract.

CHURCH ENDOWMENTS IN WALES.

MR. W. ALLAN (Gateshead): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated value of the endownments now held by Noncomformist Churches in Wales which they held prior to 1703?

MR. ASQUITH: I have no official information on this subject. As a matter of history, I believe that there were not more than about 50 Nonconformist Chapels in Wales at the date mentioned, and no doubt the great bulk of such endowments as the Nonconformist Churches in Wales enjoy are of a considerably later origin.

*MR. J. G. TALBOT: Can the right hon. Gentleman give us any idea of the amount of Nonconformist Endowments since 1703?

MR. ASQUITH: I cannot give that information.

BEHRING SEA CLAIMS.

SIR R. E. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether Her Majesty's Government have any recent information as to the present position of the negotiations for the settlement of the claims made by the British sealers in respect of the seizure of their vessels in Behring Sea by the United States Government prior to the Behring Sea Arbitration; whether he is aware that every legal ground upon which such seizures were attempted to be justified were decided adversely to the United States Government, by the Award of the tribunal at Paris; and that since the date of that Award, the only question in difference has been one of the amount of compensation to be paid; whether, in order to avoid further disputes and delay, the Canadian Government, many months ago, agreed to accept from the Government of the United States the sum of 425,000 dollars, in settlement of all claims; whether it has come to the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government, that great and growing dissatisfaction has arisen among Her Majesty's subjects in Canada, by reason of the delay in payment or settlement of their claims; and, whether Her Majesty's Government propose any, and what, steps, to bring the matter to a conclusion, by obtaining payment of the agreed amount, or if necessary by arbitration?

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, what was the date of the agreement come to between the Government of the United States and the Government of Great Britain, that the United States should pay 425,000 dollars as compensation to sealers, under the Behring Sea Arbitration Award; what conditions were attached to the agreement to enable the Award to be carried out, in the event of any failure to appropriate the necessary moneys during the Session of Congress, which has now come to an end; and, in the event of the United States Government not being in a position to pay the sum for some time to come, whether Her Majesty's Government will take steps to advance the said sum to the sealers, many of whom are in serious want, owing to the long deferred payment of their acknowledged claims for just compensation?

*SIR EDWARD GREY: I think the last point should be put to the Colonial Office. As to the questions on the Paper, I have to state that, on February 25th, the United States House of Representatives rejected the proposed appropriation for the payment of a lump sum in settlement of the claims for compensation on account of the seizure of British sealing vessels by United States cruisers prior to the Behring Sea Arbitration. The legal questions submitted to the Tribunal of Arbitration were determined by a ma- majority of the Arbitrators in a sense adverse to the contentions of the United States Government. The Canadian Government in order to avoid delay, and secure a prompt settlement, consented to accept 45,000 dollars in settlement of the claims. No representation has as yet been received from the Government of the Dominion with regard to the present position of the question, but the delay in the payment of the claims, which are consequent upon the Award of the Arbitrators, must necessarily be felt to be a cause of disappointment and loss. Negotiations were originally in progress for the reference to a commission of all claims of British subjects for injuries sustained by them in the Behring Sea, for which compensation was claimed to be due from the United States under the Award of the Tribunal by Arbitration. These negotiations were suspended when the offer of payment by a lump sum was made by the United States Government. On learning that the House of Representatives had rejected the proposal, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Washington was instructed by telegraph to urge strongly the necessity of an immediate settlement, and to inquire whether the United States Secretary of State would at once resume the negotiations for a Convention. Sir J. Pauncefote replied that Mr. Gresham was quite prepared to resume negotiations at once. The Convention, however, when signed, would have to be submitted to the Senate for confirmation by a two-thirds majority, and unless a special Session were called, which appeared unlikely, this could not be done until December next. The Secretary of State (Mr. Gresham) has expressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador his deep regret, and that of the President, at this unexpected position of affairs, and at the impossibility of preventing the unfortunate delay which must now occur in discharging the national obligations of the United States in regard to these claims.

CAMPBELTOWN SCHOOL BOARD.

MR. A. CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, on what grounds he refused the application of the Landward School Board of the Parish of Campbeltown for separation of the landward from the burghal portion of the parish for rating purposes; and if, in arriving at his decision, due consideration was given to the unanimous recommendations of the district committee, and also of the Argyleshire County Council, on the subject; and, will he make renewed investigation into the equity of the request.

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: Full consideration was given to the representations of the Landward School Board and the County Council in favour of the application, and to the representations of Campbeltown burgh School Board, the Parochial Board and Town Council against the proposal. My decision was very carefully considered. In my opinion no substantial grounds were put forward which would have justified the division of the parish into two parts. I can hold out no hope of any different decision being arrived at.

THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY.

MR. W. ALLEN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether his attention has been called to a letter in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 4th March, which states that in December last a Brass chief called Karemma made a statement to the Vice Consul, to the effect that his canoes had been seized and four of his boys shot by the crew of one of the Royal Niger Company's launches; and, whether the Government intend to take steps to prevent such occurrences in future.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked whether the House was to understand that the action of the Royal Niger Company was to be inquired into by the Commission.

*Sir EDWARD GREY said he had already answered the question. If it was required he would state the purport of it again—namely, that the inquiry would be of a wide scope, and certainly it ought to include such a point as that mentioned.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: But will the inquiry include the action of the Royal Niger Company itself?

Mr. W. ALLEN: Will it be an open inquiry?

*Sir EDWARD GREY: The inquiry is to be made by an official selected to inquire into the whole of the causes. It is not possible to make a wider statement than that.

APPOINTMENT OF OVERSEERS.

Mr. T. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether, in view of the time of the year fast approaching for the appointment of overseers and assistant overseers, the Local Government Board will expedite their decisions on applications from urban district councils to have conferred upon the councils the powers mentioned in Section 33 of the Local Government Act, 1894.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: There are upwards of 500 applications from urban district councils relating to the transfer to them of the power to appoint overseers, and the Local Government Board are using every effort to deal with them before the time when new overseers must be appointed.

THE VILLAGE OF ST. NINIANS.

Sir H. MAXWELL (Wigton): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether an Order has been prepared or issued annexing the village, church, manse, and glebe of St. Ninians to the parish of Stirling; whether he is aware that a petition has been numerously signed by the inhabitants of St. Ninians protesting against the said Order as injurious to their interests and those of the poor; and, what grounds exist for interfering with the traditional and historical independence of this parish?

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: The proposed Order was gazetted on the 25th January. I have received the petition from the inhabitants of St. Ninians protesting against the Order. This will be duly considered before the Order is confirmed. A similar course to that adopted with regard to Stirling burgh has been taken in other cities regarding which I have received applications to place the whole municipal area within a single parish.

COMMISSIONER OF WOODS AND FORESTS.

Sir R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has considered the advisability of taking advantage of the present vacancy in the office of Commissioner of Her Majesty's Woods and Forests to place that office under the control of the Board of Agriculture?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): No; I do not think that a change of that kind would be practicable or advisable. Out of a gross income of £514,000 the agricultural land contributes £72,000, which is not one-seventh part of the whole estate. The rest of it consists of land and house property in London and elsewhere, and of mines and other properties which are not at all appropriate to the Agricultural Department. Though I have profound confidence in my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, I do not think it proper to hand over six-sevenths of this estate to be dealt with by his Department.

ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES.

*Sir C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Motion to first go into Committee on the Navy Votes for the coming financial year is likely to be made?

Mr. A. B. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): Would the right hon. Gentleman make such arrangements of the business of the House as will allow us to have a very full opportunity of discussing the Navy Votes with the Speaker in the Chair without the plea of urgent public circumstances being brought forward to shorten the discussion, as was done last year?

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman introduce the Bill with regard to the loan for works before we come to the general discussion of naval policy with the Speaker in the Chair?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The loans for works will depend on the decision of the House on the Estimates; I could not take the Bill for loans separately and before the Estimates. I am in considerable difficulty, but I am doing the best I can to make arrangements. Both the Secretary for War and the Secretary to the Admiralty are disabled, and I certainly recognise that we ought to give to the very important proposals of the Government with reference to the Navy the fullest opportunity of discussing this important matter. I should propose, subject to what I have said, to take the Army Estimates first. I must, however, ask leave to postpone the fixing of the date. I am not able to do so at present.

PENSION FOR TEACHERS.

Mr. A. BILLSON (Devon, Barnstaple): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he has considered the Report of the Departmental Committee on Pensions for Teachers; and, if he is able to say whether, and how far, its recommendations can be carried out.

Sir W. HARCOURT: This is a very interesting and important question. My hon. Friend may be assured that the Government have it under their careful consideration, with a view to arriving at an early decision upon it; but he will feel that, besides the Government, the persons interested—namely, the teachers—ought to have time to consider the proposals of the Departmental Committee. The Government are very desirous to consider and to decide at an early time what action they will be able to take upon this report.

UNIFICATION OF LONDON.

*Mr. H. S. FOSTER: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Government propose to introduce their promised Bill on the subject of the Unification of London?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I think I can undertake that the Bill will not be introduced before Easter.

DUTY ON SPIRITS.

Mr. J. E. REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his intention to renew in his next Budget the additional duty on spirits imposed by the Finance Act of last year?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I think the hon. Member, from his experience of the House of Commons, can hardly expect an answer to this question. There is a French saying to the effect that there is no such thing as an indiscreet question, it is only the answer that is indiscreet. Certainly it has never been the practice in this House for a Chancellor of the Exchequer in the middle of March to state what are the arrangements with reference to taxation until the proposal of the Budget.

Mr. J. REDMOND said, the reason why he asked the question with reference to the date of the Budget was, because last year, the right hon. Gentleman stated as a concession that this tax would only last for one year.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I cannot at present state the exact date of the Budget, whether it will be produced before or after Easter.

THE IRISH LAND BILL.

Mr. J. E. REDMOND: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it is the intention of the Government to take any special steps to secure the passing of the Irish Land Bill through Committee at an early period of the Session, either by referring it to an Irish Grand Committee, or by proceeding with it *pari passu* with the Established Church (Wales) Bill.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Here, again, I am afraid that I cannot give the hon. Member much satisfaction. Until after the Second Reading of the Bill we could not make any arrangements or statement as to what will be done in Committee.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON: When will the Second Reading of the Bill be taken?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I have always said after the second reading of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill

OCCUPIERS OF LAND AND INCOME TAX.

MR. A. M. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether an owner occupying his own land, who presents properly prepared and audited accounts showing a loss instead of a profit on such land, is entitled to demand relief from Income Tax, under Schedule A, before making payment, or whether he must in every case make payment first and seek for repayment or redress afterwards.

SIR W. HARCOURT: By Section 23 of 53 and 54 Vic., cap. 8, a person occupying lands for the purposes of husbandry only who sustains a loss from such occupation can appeal within six months after the year of assessment to the General Commissioners of Income-Tax for his district, for an adjustment of his liability by reference to the loss and to the aggregate amount of his income for that year, estimated according to the several rules and directions of the Income Tax Acts, which would, of course, include his property assessed under Schedule A. Such a claim would be adjusted by way of repayment only.

SIR M. E. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would make inquiries with reference to the delay of repayment, of which he was assured that many complaints might be made by persons who claimed?

SIR W. HARCOURT: No doubt the remissions that were granted in the Budget last year have given rise to a much larger number of claims for repayment than existed before, and the pressure on the department is naturally very great. But I will take care to inquire and to urge that as little delay as possible may arise in respect of those claims.

THE SWAZILAND MOUNTED POLICE.

MR. ALEXANDER CROSS: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that steps have recently been taken, by advertisement and otherwise, to increase the strength of the Swaziland Mounted Police Force; and whether any portion of the extra expense thus incurred will be paid by the Imperial Treasury, or out of the grant made by the Imperial Treasury towards the expenses of ruling Swaziland?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Her Majesty's Government some little time ago sanctioned an increase of 30 police in the strength of the Swaziland Mounted Police Force; they are not responsible for any part of the cost of these police after February 20 last, but they are responsible for a moiety of the cost up to that date. The cost will be met out of the South African Vote.

DANGEROUS EMPLOYMENTS.

MR. E. F. VESEY KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what processes or particular descriptions of manual labour have been certified by the Secretary of State, in pursuance of Section 8 of the Factories Act, 1891, to be dangerous or injurious to health or dangerous to life and limb; and whether it is intended by Clause 26 of the Factories and Workshops Bill to empower the Secretary of State to prohibit the employment of women or children, or young persons, in any of these occupations; and, in particular, whether it is intended that the Secretary of State shall have power to order shorter hours in the linen industry than those which prevail in the cotton industry?

MR. ASQUITH: The processes which have been dealt with under the enactment referred to are the following:—The manufacturers of white, red, orange, and yellow lead, and lead smelting, tinning and enamelling works, the manufacture of colours, lucifer match factories, the making of earthenware, certain processes in the manufacture of explosives, chemical works, electric - accumulator works, flax mills, and linen factories, brass mixing and casting, quarries. The clause in question is directed to the case of trades where, from the nature of the industry itself, whatever precautions may be taken to insure the safety of those concerned, particular processes cannot be carried on by particular classes of workers, from reasons of age or sex, without running exceptional risks to life or health. I may mention, by way of illustration, the white lead industry, in which, as the Report of the Departmental Committee showed, young persons ought not to be employed at all, and there are certain processes in which no women, and others in which no woman under a certain age, can safely engage. At present the Secretary of State is powerless to deal with such cases. There is no intention whatever to exercise the proposed powers, either as to total prohibition or as to limitation of hours, in the case of the linen industry, which is only dangerous or injurious to health if proper and easily practicable safeguards are neglected. Still less is it intended to make any discrimination between the linen and cotton trades.

SCOTCH FEUS AND LEASES

Mr. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, when he intends to implement the promise made by him to the House on 22nd August last, viz., that the Government would at the earliest period in their power embody in a Bill the recommendations of the Select Committee on Feus and Building Leases in Scotland, including the recommendation that powers should be granted to elected bodies to provide or acquire land by agreement or compulsorily for the erection of workmen's dwellings?

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: In reply to the hon. Member, the Government have a measure on the lines suggested by the Select Committee on Feus and Building Leases in Scotland, which they hope to lay before Parliament at an early date.

ORKNEY AND SHETLAND LIGHTS.

Mr. M. H. SHAW-STEWART (Renfrew, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, (1) if he is aware that steamers, carrying Her Majesty's bi-weekly mails and passengers, besides many other vessels, have to navigate the dangerous western coasts of the Orkney and Shetland Islands without a single light to guide them, in latitudes where frequent storms occur, and where, during a great part of the year, there are only about seven hours of daylight; and (2) whether, seeing that there been frequent wrecks on the Veeskerrie reef of rocks, lying three miles out from the Shetland coast, and on the North Shoal, lying nine miles out from the Orkney coast, he will cause a lighthouse to be erected on Noop Head, in the island of Westray, Orkney?

Mr. Asquith.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. J. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): It can hardly be said that the western coasts of the Orkney and Shetland Islands are entirely unlighted, as there are lights at Dunnet Head and Hoy Sound, on the south-western coast of the Orkneys; moreover, a light, which will be of use to trading vessels in those waters, is now being erected at Sule Skerry, and will, I hope, be lit shortly. As regards the second paragraph, a proposal is before me for the erection of a light, either on Mull Head or on Noop Head, both in the Island of Westray, and I have no doubt that the Board of Trade will shortly be able to sanction one or other alternative.

THE CONVICT CALLAGHAN.

Mr. C. A. V. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Callaghan, who is undergoing a life sentence for treason felony, is still in Portland Prison; whether his eyesight has been entirely lost to him since he has been in gaol; can he explain why Callaghan's wife has received no letter from or news of him for about 12 months, although he is entitled to write a letter once every three months; and, whether it is the rule to require the full term to be served by prisoners who have lost either wholly or partially their eyesight while in prison?

Mr. ASQUITH: Callaghan is still in Portland Prison. It is not the fact that his eyesight has been lost to him since he has been in gaol. He was blind in the left eye before conviction, and as he complained of pains in the right eye and in the head, I had him specially examined about 18 months ago by an ophthalmic expert, who advised the removal of the blind eye. Callaghan assented to this being done, and the operation was successfully performed in July 1893, with the result that the right eye has ceased to give him any trouble, that the pain in the head has gone, and that he is able to read with glasses. I have taken great personal interest in his case, and I am satisfied that he could not have been more skilfully or humanely treated in any hospital. I find that he has not availed himself of the opportunities which he has had for writing letters for some time back, but so far as the authorities of the gaol are concerned, there is no reason why he should not have done so. As Callaghan has not lost his sight while in prison, the last question does not in strictness arise, but I may say that considerations of health are always taken into account in determining how long a prisoner shall serve. In the present case I hope to be very soon in a position to order the prisoner's release.

MR. CONYBEARE: I had no intention of suggesting that the treatment had not been proper. But with reference to the statement that Callaghan's eyesight was bad from the first, I wish to ask whether it is not a fact that an accident occurred during an operation, and that that accident is supposed to have led to the final obstruction of his sight?

MR. ASQUITH: Certainly not in my term of office. I have no knowledge of such an accident.

A TRAINING SHIP FOR QUEENSTOWN HARBOUR.

CAPT. A. J. C. DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary, to whom I have given private notice of the question, whether he can say when the necessary arrangements for the establishment of a Training Ship at Queenstown are likely to be completed? A statement on this subject appears in the Memorandum of the First Lord of the Admiralty on the Naval Estimates; and it is a statement which will be received with much satisfaction in the south of Ireland and in my own constituency.

MR. J. MORLEY: My noble Friend, the First Lord, has made communications to me on the subject from time to time; but all I can say in answer to the specific question is that no time will be lost in establishing a Training Ship in Queenstown Harbour.

THE EXTRADITION OF JABEZ BALFOUR.

MR. R. B. MARTIN (Worcester, Droitwich): I wish, Sir, to call attention to a personal matter, and to offer a word of personal explanation. In the Debate which arose on Tuesday night on the subject of the Supplementary Vote for legal expenses in connection with the extradition of Jabez Spencer Balfour, the hon. Member for Haggerston said:—

> "There was a strong feeling prevailing out of doors that there was a want of desire on the part of many hon. Members that Jabez Balfour should return to this country."

The hon. Member was pressed by the Attorney General to put that charge—which was a very grave and serious one—into more definite form, and he then stated that—

> "The general impression out of doors was that money had been found by the Debenture Corporation."

The hon. Member for South Derbyshire (Mr. Broad) and myself are directors of the Debenture Corporation, and it is against us that the charge is made. I wish to ask the indulgence of the House to deny most emphatically that it is in the least degree material to me, or to the hon. Member for South Derbyshire, or to the Debenture Corporation, or, as far as I know, to any one connected with it, whether Jabez Balfour comes back to this country or not. We have no interest whatever in the matter, and are absolutely unconcerned. I think the House will agree with me that a charge of this kind ought not lightly to be brought, and ought not to be brought without some shadow of proof such as I cannot possibly imagine to exist. All I have to say is, to give a most emphatic denial, in the most public way possible, to the statement, because it has been taken up by several newspapers, and *The Times* itself has put it forward as an absolute statement of fact by the hon. Member for Haggerston.

*MR. W. R. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I have to thank the hon. Member for giving me notice that he intended to raise this question this afternoon. Until yesterday I had not the slightest idea that the hon. Member was directly or indirectly connected with the Debenture Corporation, so that what I stated on the occasion to which he has referred could not have had the slightest reference to him. I was acquainted with the fact that the hon. Member for South Derbyshire was connected with the Debenture Corporation, but the observations which I made the night before last had not the least personal reference to him any more than to the hon. Member for Worcestershire. I never heard it even rumoured that either of the hon. Members had had any specific charge made against them. Before I say anything more in the matter, I should like, if the forms of the House will permit me, to ask a question of the hon. Member for South Derbyshire. There appeared in *The Westminster Gazette* last night an account headed—

> "Debenture Corporation and Jabez—Mr. Cremer's Statement—An Authoritative and Official Denial."

I wish to ask the hon. Member for South Derbyshire whether the statement attributed to him by the interviewer of *The Westminster Gazette* in that account is accurate?

Mr. H. E. BROAD (Derbyshire, S.): The statement is perfectly correct.

*__Mr. CREMER__: Then I think no explanation is needed from me. The hon. Member admitted to the interviewer that those rumours to which I have referred did exist, and were largely prevalent. He stated that since the departure of Jabez Balfour from this country the directors of the Debenture Corporation had considerably changed, and that one of the new directors, Mr. Hugh Smith, of the Bank of England—a gentleman of the most perfect honour and integrity—had thought it his duty, before he took part in the official transactions of the Corporation, to put a series of questions, concerning the nature and character of the rumours to which I referred the other night, to the old directors. The admission of the hon. Member that this took place is a justification of my statement that such rumours prevailed out of doors. I made no specific charge against the hon. Member. I made no specific charge against any man or any body of men. I simply spoke of a belief that largely prevailed out of doors; and said I thought that it was time these rumours should either be proved or confuted. I think that the hon. Members ought to thank me for having afforded them the opportunity of publicly making their denial. Perhaps I may be permitted to ask one other question before I sit down. It is, whether the two hon. Members can, on behalf of the Debenture Corporation, say whether that company would be willing to have a committee or a commission appointed to inquire into the mysterious circumstances surrounding the whole of these transactions. [*Cries of* "Order."] As yet, no information is forthcoming as to where these thousands of pounds——

*__Mr. SPEAKER__: Order, order. Having elicited from the hon. Member for Derbyshire (Mr. Broad) that there is no truth in the rumour referred to, the hon. Member is hardly justified in putting these further questions. I think the statement of the hon. Member for Derbyshire should satisfy all the requirements of the case.

COURSE OF BUSINESS.

Sir M. E. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) inquired what business would be taken at the Morning Sitting to-morrow, and whether Army and Navy Votes would be taken on Monday; also what business would be set down for Tuesday next?

Sir W. HARCOURT: To-day we hope to be able to finish the Civil Service Supplementary Estimates. I have consulted with my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, and he thinks it would be more convenient to the House if the Navy Supplementary Estimates were taken with the other Navy Estimates, and in that I am disposed to agree with him. I think, perhaps, it will be the better way. Then, finishing, as I hope we may, the Civil Service Supplementary Estimates to-night, we hope to take what I call the Government minor Bills to-morrow; the First Readings, I mean, of the Scotch Local Government Bill and the Light Railways Bill. Then I am placed in considerable difficulty about the Army Estimates, for I have just received a note from my right hon. Friend the Secretary for War in which he says it is uncertain whether he will be well enough to be here on Monday. Provisionally, therefore, I must propose to take the Navy Estimates on Monday, in case the Secretary for War should not be here to take the Army Estimates. But I would rather not lend myself, and will make a more definite statement to-morrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—CIVIL SERVICE.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID in the Chair.

Class 3.

£7,000 Miscellaneous Legal Expenses.

*MR. C. B. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said, there were some manifestations of impatience and annoyance from the other side of the House when the discussion upon this Vote was carried over from Tuesday last. If justification were wanted for adjourning the discussion, that could be found in that very impatience, and he might further say that the conversation which had just taken place on a matter of personal explanation, increased the necessity for treating the subject as one of considerable Parliamentary importance. The impatience to which he alluded proceeded from his endeavour to put certain questions to the Government and from the failure of the Government adequately to appreciate the soreness of the public mind in reference to certain circumstances connected with the case of Jabez Balfour, and its indignation at a signal defeat of justice. That failure of the Government to appreciate the attitude of the public mind was evinced on Tuesday in more ways than one. In the first place he protested against the doctrine laid down by the Attorney General, who he thought might have treated the subject with greater gravity than he did—that there was a total absence of continuity between the action of an Attorney General and his successor or predecessor. The learned and distinguished predecessor of the Attorney General, when questioned in the House as to this case, said he could not be answerable for the action of his predecessor.

SIR ROBERT T. REID: I never said so.

*MR. STUART-WORTLEY said he was speaking now of the late Attorney General, who, it would be remembered, said he could not be answerable for the action of his predecessor, and the answer of the present Attorney General was in the same direction. Such a doctrine, however, was not consistent with Ministerial and Parliamentary practice. He felt bound to say that, even if it were possible for the Attorney General to plead either from want of records, or on the doctrine of non-continuity of administrative responsibility, that it was impossible for him to answer, still in this case he might stretch a point on account of the public feeling he had referred to. If that doctrine were accepted, then Ministerial responsibility would become attenuated until it became beautifully small and disappeared altogether. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs made an admirable statement so far as it went, but really it was a starting-point to ask for further information. The Committee were glad to hear that the vigour of Her Majesty's Government had obtained the ratification of the inchoate Treaty of Extradition. They were also glad to learn that the Government were seconded—and there was no reason to doubt the loyalty of the Argentine Government—that in putting pressure on the Provincial Government to have these proceedings against Jabez Balfour effectually prosecuted, they had the support of the Argentine Federal Government. What he wished to criticise was the statement of the Under Secretary as regards this prosecution in its latest developments, that the Government could not be expected to make inquiries or communications. To that position he took exception. He did not call upon the Government to put vexatious questions.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Berwick-on-Tweed): I did not mean to imply that. What I intended to say, and what I think I said, was that Her Majesty's Government have no means of knowing the details of this action or of investigating them, for these could only be gone into in the Provincial Court. I did not mean to imply that we could not make all possible inquiries before the case was tried.

*MR. STUART-WORTLEY said, it was not necessary that vexatious questions should be put to Argentina which might compromise the dignity of that Government, and still less that any question should imply doubt of the *bona fides* of that Government; but, considering that Her Majesty's Government had for many months an experienced officer representing them in the territory, and that he had lately returned and would be replaced by another, and seeing that we had a Consular officer also, he could not altogether assent to the proposition that the Government had not the means of getting more information than they seemed to have got. Having the means of getting it, it was their duty to get it and above all to show that they had got it. He made no comment as to whether the charge was genuine or not, but proceeded to give further examples of the points which were not cleared up on Tuesday last. Two facts he gathered from statements then made which carried with them some reassurance—first, that Jabez Balfour was in custody, and not merely under a technical arrest from which he might escape; and, secondly, that the local prosecution if not taken on the initiative of the Provincial Government was managed by the Provincial Government. That was not all they wanted to know. Of course, every prosecution must be on the initiative of the individual sufferer, but was there any serious probability that the energy and means of giving testimony would be effectively forthcoming? The prosecution was being managed by the Provincial Government, but was it assisted by the resources of that Government, or was the animus, or want of animus in the matter, left to the individual prosecutor? The hon. Gentleman spoke of the legal vacation having interposed unexpected and regrettable delay. In this country criminal proceedings were not interfered with in this way, though civil proceedings might be. He was bound to say that one did hear rumours about this case which one would be glad not to hear, such, for instance, as that the papers necessary to the Salta prosecution had been lost: and all would be glad to know what the nature of the charges brought against Jabez Balfour in Argentina were. He thought the Government had no reason to complain if, in a matter which gave rise to so much public uneasiness, hon. Members wished to emphasise the inquiries that were being made, by attributing to them as much Parliamentary importance as they could.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley), hoped that Members on both sides of the House would do their best to extract from the Government something more satisfactory—something more evidencing their determination to get at the bottom of this matter—than they had hitherto produced; for, although they might get this Vote, that would not finish the matter, because the numerous victims look to the Government to do something in their interest, and in the interest of public morality. The feeling in the matter was very strong, and he was sure it would increase until something more definite was done by the Government. The replies given on Tuesday night on behalf of the Government were most unsatisfactory. The Attorney General turned his mind to charges, which he did not understand to have been made, of bad faith on the part of the Government, and of their having winked at the escape of Balfour. The charge made was that the Government had shown a certain laxity in the pursuit of this question, and he was bound to say that the feeling which largely prevailed outside, and to a great extent in the House, would be greatly confirmed and increased by the inadequacy of the replies from the Front Bench. The reply of the Under Secretary was eminently unsatisfactory. The hon. Gentleman said that the Government were going to conceal nothing. If they had told the House all they knew, the charge of laxity and want of determination in carrying the matter through had been abundantly proved. It was quite true, as the Under Secretary had said, that there was a provincial Government in Argentina that overruled the central Government, a sort of Home Rule Government that paralysed the action of the law of the land. The Attorney General said that the charge against Balfour was some sort of fraud on a brewer. The House would like to know whether it was a real charge or a collusive charge, made to defeat the law, whether Balfour was arrested on that charge or whether he was left free to enjoy himself, as it appeared he had been. They would also like to know, when Balfour took up his residence at Salta, and what steps had been taken by the agents of the Government in Argentina to ascertain how the case was proceeding. They were told by the Under Secretary that the Government had no knowledge of the matter, and, further, that they could not know anything about it. It was simply playing with the House to talk in that manner, and he hoped that an attempt would be made to extract a promise that there should be a fresh departure and an energetic effort made to bring about a settlement. He felt sure that if the Scotland Yard authorities had not been hampered by the Government they would have had Balfour back long before this. There was an impression outside the House that if the Government were to speak to the Argentine Government in a certain tone and let them know that, instead of pursuing this matter in a perfunctory manner, they treated it as a matter of the highest importance which they were determined to prosecute with energy, Jabez Balfour would immediately make his appearance; but so long as it was carried on from month to month with no more energy than was displayed in the speeches of the Attorney General and the Under Secretary, Jabez Balfour would never come back. He hoped the House would get from the Front Bench an undertaking in a different spirit, and he trusted that his hon. Friend the Member for Deptford would go to a Division if only to mark the fact that both sides of the House of Commons had a living sympathy with the hundreds and thousands of victims who had been reduced to penury and want, and that the House, whatever the attitude of the Government might be, would do its very best to get this man back to take his trial for what he had done.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. T. REID, Dumfries) said, that it was the desire of the Government to give all the information they possessed on this matter. He understood on Tuesday night that there was a suggestion of laxity in the proceedings with regard to this person, by which he was enabled to go away and stay away. So far as his remaining in Argentina was concerned after he first got there, that was a matter on which the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had spoken, and in regard to which he said—and he was quite certain it was the truth—that every effort that could be made had been made to secure his return. It had been suggested that there had been proceedings of a collusive and criminal character in Argentina, but a moment's reflection would show that that could not be prevented or controlled from England. Those proceedings were exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Courts in Argentina, and they had decided that they could not surrender this individual until he had answered the criminal charges made against him in that country. As to the suggestion that there had been laxity in allowing this man to go abroad in the winter of 1892, shortly after the Liberator and other Companies had failed, the matter came into the hands of the Official Receiver of the Board of Trade for the purpose of inquiring into the whole of the circumstances. When the Official Receiver determined that there was ground to prosecute Hobbs and Wright, neither he nor the Attorney General of the day was possessed of materials which afforded ground for criminal proceedings against Jabez Balfour. Hon. Gentlemen could have no idea of the complexity of this case. He had himself had to go through enormous masses of correspondence. When Hobbs and Wright were prosecuted on comparatively simple issues extracted from the great volume of matter that existed, there was no material that would warrant proceedings against Jabez Balfour, or enable Her Majesty's Government to commit him, or to interfere with his liberty in any way. In December 1892 Hobbs and Wright were arrested, and immediately after that Jabez Balfour left the country. Everyone familar with criminal proceedings knew that if there was no material for initiating criminal proceedings against a man, he could not be detained. From the moment when materials did come into the hands of the Attorney General, he felt the utmost anxiety that the proper course should be adopted. In point of that, it was then impossible to get Jabez Balfour back, and the difficult question which had to be considered was, what time to select for taking steps against any directors of other companies who were connected with these affairs. It was hoped from month to month that news would come of the order for the extradition of Jabez Balfour, and that he would return. It was, however, not till October 1894 that the final order of extradition was made by the Court of Appeal, and then succeeded those other criminal proceedings in Argentina, to which it was decided precedence should be given. As soon as it became apparent that a further delay of an indefinite character was to be interposed before the extradition, the proceedings against other directors were ordered. They were ordered in the beginning of January, and were now going on. It was not until December 1894 that the Law Officers came to the conclusion that it was hopeless to expect the return of Jabez Balfour until further delay should have occurred. The informations against the individuals charged were prepared partially before December, and the final directions for a prosecution were given on January 9 of this year. There was thus a delay on account of the hopes entertained that Jabez Balfour would be brought back to stand his trial with the other parties, but that delay had done no harm at all, because the parties charged had all appeared, and were now before a police magistrate. He believed that any hon. Members who had taken part in that discussion would probably have acted in this matter, if they had been responsible, just as successive Attorneys General had acted. There was no Member of the Government who would fail to sympathise with those who had suffered losses through these defalcations, but it would ill become one who would probably have to conduct the prosecution against the parties charged to express any opinion as to their guilt or innocence. There was no Member of the Government who did not desire that Jabez Balfour might be brought back to this country as soon as possible, in order that he might either be acquitted or convicted before a court of justice.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) explained, that hon. Members on his side of the House had no wish to blame in any way the Law Officers of the Crown. Their accusation was against the Foreign Department, which was showing a want of political energy and diplomatic capacity. South American Republics shared largely the characteristics and disposition of Eastern peoples, and every man who had served in Asia knew how much diplomatic pressure by such a Power as England could effect. It was his opinion, therefore, that if the voice of England had spoken in proper tones to the Argentine Republic, Jabez Balfour would have been given up long ago. Mere feeble correspondence would not avail, for the Government of Argentina would be anxious to keep him in the country as long as he had money to spend in its law courts. What was the character of the provincial tribunal which was detaining Jabez Balfour? The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had exposed the ignorance of his Department in this affair; but, at all events, the Argentine Government could be asked specifically what were the charges brought against Jabez Balfour in the Provincial Courts. They would then be able to judge whether those charges were real and earnest, or shadowy and unsubstantial. Supposing there should be any collusion on the other side of the Atlantic with the object of keeping Jabez Balfour there, how easy it would be for him to plead guilty to some charge before a Provincial Court, and then to escape while undergoing some nominal imprisonment! In that case we might never see him again. There was a deeply-rooted suspicion in many minds that, while there might be parties in Argentina who were interested in keeping Jabez Balfour there, there were also persons in this country who were similarly interested. That House, which was the grand inquest of the nation, ought not to be satisfied with such speeches as had been delivered from the Treasury Bench, and as a Sovereign Assembly it ought to insist upon the Government taking more vigorous measures.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) asked, whether they were to understand that information, which was not in the possession of the authorities in December 1892, had reached the law advisers since that time. He referred to information which had enabled them to formulate charges against certain parties. The hon. and learned Gentleman would remember that, in the month of November 1892, a Report was issued from the Board of Trade, but was not made public. There was an idea in many people's minds that that Report itself contained sufficiently grave material to warrant the taking of proceedings. It would be interesting to know whether it was upon information subsequently obtained that the proceedings now going on had been initiated.

SIR R. T. REID replied that he had been informed from official sources that when Hobbs and Wright were arrested and Jabez Balfour fled there was no material before the Public Prosecutor which would have warranted additional criminal proceedings.

SIR R. E. WEBSTER thanked the hon. and learned Gentleman for his statement. It was important, because it disposed once and for ever of the idea that prompter efforts might have been made to bring Jabez Balfour to justice. As to the conduct of the Foreign Office he could say nothing except that he quite understood that it was no easy matter to arrange affairs of this kind when one had to deal with South American Governments and Courts of Justice.

*SIR EDWARD GREY said, that various complaints had been made this evening to the effect that he had not given certain specific information in his former speech on the case of Mr. Jabez Balfour. And, first of all, in reference to the complaint of the hon. Member for Kingston, as to want of diplomatic energy, as to making the voice of England heard in such peremptory terms as should secure the surrender of the man who was alleged to have committed a criminal offence, he begged him to remember that under the late Government, as was fully stated in Parliamentary Paper No. 193, Argentine Republic, there had been instances where they had been unable to secure a surrender. What was more, the late Government were unable to secure the execution of an Extradition Treaty betwen Argentina and the Government of this country. The present Government had improved that position. They had secured the ratification of a Treaty, which had now come into force, and which had never existed before, because the Legislature of Argentina had not been willing to sanction its ratification. That, at any rate, was some evidence of diplomatic energy and activity on the part of Her Majesty's present Government. The proceedings against Mr. Jabez Balfour under the Extradition Treaty, he admitted, seemed to him to be prolonged—he could not say unduly so, because he was not sufficiently cognisant of the legal and constitutional arguments involved; but certainly to a greater length than Her Majesty's Government wished. They had cost large sums of money, but they were eventually decided in our favour. Subsequently a charge had been brought against Mr. Jabez Balfour in the Provincial Court of Salta, and the construction put upon the Treaty was, that the Provincial Court was entitled to investigate that charge before they surrendered Mr. Jabez Balfour to the Federal authorities. The charge was, that Mr. Jabez Balfour had entered into a contract to purchase a brewery, or into such a contract connected with a brewery, that he bound himself down to pay a considerable sum of money to a certain individual on a certain date last year, that he failed to pay, and that he entered into the contract under an assumed name.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): What was the amount of money?

*SIR EDWARD GREY thought the amount was £30,000. The reason why he did not enter fully into details regarding this charge in his former speech was that that was not the real point of the difficulty. The difficulty was, that the Procurator Fiscal in the province of Salta insisted on pressing this charge, and said it was necessary to have the charge threshed out.

MR. J. H. DALZIEL: Is it the case that the original complainant has abandoned the charge?

*SIR EDWARD GREY replied, that that was perfectly true, but the difficulty remained that the Provincial authorities insisted on pressing the charge in their own Court. Now, Her Majesty's Government had represented to the Federal Government that there ought not to be delay in finishing the case one way or other in the Provincial Court; and the Federal Government, which has strictly prescribed constitutional relations with the Provincial authorities, had more than once pressed that view upon the Provincial authorities. If the case ended in favour of Mr. Jabez Balfour, the Provincial authorities were bound to surrender him to the Federal authority, who, in turn, were bound by the decision under the Treaty to surrender him to us without any delay. As to whether there was any chance of his escape while under this charge, whether this was or was not a collusive action, whether there was undue delay in pressing this case—these were matters which concerned most intimately the honour of the Argentine Government. The point on which it was right and sensible and just that Her Majesty's Government should concentrate their efforts was, that there should not be delay in either convicting or acquitting Balfour of the charge. There would be no reluctance on the part of Her Majesty's Government to press that point. He had only to add, on the general question, that though he did not know whether Mr. Jabez Balfour was innocent or guilty of the charges brought against him in this country, but having regard to the nature of those charges—that he was alleged to be the cause of bringing ruin and misery, deep and widespread, into many homes, even in remote and poor villages of the country—in the interests of justice and for the satisfaction of everybody throughout the country, who had suffered under the effects of that which he was alleged to have been the cause, it was of the first importance that he should be surrendered and brought to trial in this country.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN said, his hon. Friend had brought the point at issue very clearly before the Committee, but what the House of Commons wanted to know was whether the new charge brought against Jabez Balfour was a collusive charge or not. Surely, with the information at their disposal, the Government could form a pretty clear idea upon that point. They must have made up their minds whether this charge, which bore a most suspicious appearance, to say the least of it, was or was not collusive. Because, look at the position, not only in regard to Balfour, but every other criminal who escaped to the Argentine Republic. The Under Secretary made it very properly a boast that the Government had been able to obtain the ratification of an Extradition Treaty. But the Treaty was a dead letter. For the moment the Government applied for the extradition of this particular person under the Treaty, some trumpery and ridiculous charge was set up in the Provincial Court, and he was, thereupon, withheld altogether from us. The Under Secretary said the Government would press the case; but, unless the pressure was of a very different kind from anything exerted up to the present time, it was perfectly certain it would be of no avail. But suppose that this new charge was brought to trial, and suppose Mr. Jabez Balfour pleaded guilty—why, he might have arranged his fall, he might have chosen the bed on which he was to lie, he might know the sort of imprisonment which this Provincial Government would extend to him; and in this way the matter might be so conducted by callusion with the Provincial authorities that, after Mr. Jabez Balfour had pleaded guilty in Argentina, he might escape with practically no punishment, and we should never be able to get him back to this country. An hon. Friend near him suggested another possibility, which was that as soon as Mr. Jabez Balfour had been acquitted upon one collusive charge a new collusive charge might be brought, and so on *ad infinitum*. He would be the most heavily charged man in the world, but the result would be that he would never be punished for any single one of those charges. The practical question was, what ought to be done. He thoroughly agreed with the hon. Member for Kingston that these countries were extremely susceptible to the opinion of European countries, and that in Argentina especially, they were likely to be particularly susceptible to the opinion of the British House of Commons and the British people. Now, had the Federal Government, under the Constitution of Argentina, no control whatever over the Procurator Fiscal?

*__Sir EDWARD GREY__ was understood to say that they had no control over the Procurator Fiscal of the Provincial Government.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Therefore, as far as these proceedings were concerned, the local Government was absolutely independent of the Federal

Government, and the local Government, under this system of home rule, might make absolutely of no avail a solemn international agreement of the Federal Government. He wished they had known that two years ago. It would have been a most admirable illustration. But, even if such were the case, he would still submit that the Federal Government must have a good deal of moral influence with the Provincial Government, and would be able in some way, financial or otherwise, to make its opinion respected, Therefore, he still thought our first duty was to make our opinion known and, if possible, respected by the Federal Government. Under ordinary circumstances it was quite true that they did not interfere at all in civil and criminal proceedings in another country, but when their subjects were concerned, when great interests were involved, when there was reason to believe, either that there was collusion or improper and illegal practices or unnecessary delay, or where there was an evident intention to evade the treaty—in all these cases there had been made solemn protests. Up to the present time there had been nothing apparently but the most ordinary diplomatic intercourse. They thought it time that that should cease, and something stronger should be said. They thought if the Government even made an appeal to the common-sense and good feeling of civilised Europe, in regard to matters of this kind, it might be to some effect. It was a perfect disgrace for any Government, which called itself civilised, to be sheltering a criminal or one who was accused of such offences as this man. All this ought to be brought out by the Government. If it were really powerless it should be clearly manifested that everything had been done, the conduct of the Argentine Government and of the Provincial Government should be made clear to the world, and that should be followed up by the strongest terms in which Diplomacy ever indulged. That was the point at issue between the two sides, and unless they could have an assurance from the Government that much stronger action would be taken in the immediate future—and not in so many months or years hence—he should certainly follow his hon. Friend opposite into the Lobby.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) remarked, that the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had attempted to ride off on the point whether, under this Treaty, extradition could be granted. But there was a larger and more important question, which was whether, Treaty or no Treaty, under international comity they should not be able to get this fugitive from justice? For years they had no Extradition Treaty with Portugal, but whenever they wanted a criminal who had fled to that country, he was handed over to them under the comity of nations. In this particular case the Government said they could not get Jabez Balfour, because there was difficulty about the Extradition Treaty. But he was offered to them. The Minister for Foreign Affairs at Buenos Ayres, writing on 25th February 1893, said:—

> "If you present a demand for extradition, accompanied by the offer of reciprocity, this Ministry will hasten to comply with it, provided the necessary documents are enclosed therewith."

So that two years ago, this Ministry might have had Jabez Balfour if they would have promised, on their part, to return any Jabez Balfours from Argentina, who might be in this country. Under these circumstances, it was not possible for the Foreign Office to shelter itself under the Treaty. The hon. Baronet had said that the late Government tried to get a fugitive after the Treaty had been signed, but before it was ratified, and failed. Yes, but that was a fugitive of the vulgar ordinary dimensions—a common-place forger, named Cope—whilst this was a criminal of colossal and national dimensions; and the effort that would have been adequate for a Cope was, by no means, adequate in the case of a Jabez Balfour. He did not know upon what construction of the Treaty itself it was possible for the Argentine Government to refuse the extradition of Balfour at this moment. He presumed it was under Article 4. But Article 4—which was monstrously mis-translated, as was invariably the case with these documents in the Foreign Office—said:—

> "If a person claimed, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, or on the part of the Government of the Argentine Republic, should be under examination (the word should be detained, the Spanish word being *detenido*) for any other crime, in the Argentine Republic or the

United Kingdom respectively, his extradition shall be deferred until the conclusion of the trial, and full execution of any punishment awarded to him."

But, when he was claimed, Balfour was not detained or under examination. This new charge was not made for months after he was claimed by the English Government, and it was not until the claim of Her Majesty's Government was admitted by the Federal Government, and the order of extradition had been issued by the Federal Government, that the present charge was made. How was it possible, thereupon, to apply Article 4 to the case? Under no possible construction could it apply, and under this very Article, as well as under the rest of the Treaty, Jabez Balfour ought certainly to be given up to Her Majesty's Government. The hon. Baronet had claimed credit for the ratification of this Treaty, but if the Extradition Treaty was to be of no more effect than this they had better have none at all. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had shown how, by a succession of charges made one after another, in case Jabez should have the misfortune to be acquitted on one he would get his friends to make another, and the result would be quite interminable. When they were making a Treaty with the Federal Government, and when they knew that the Federal had no control over the Provincial Government, the business of the English Government was either to make an Extradition Treaty with each of the Provincial Governments, or else require, as a preliminary to their Extradition Treaty with the Federal Government that it should make one with each Provincial Government, otherwise the Extradition Treaty might be valueless or might be defeated by the perfectly honest but mistaken action of the Provincial Governments. The hon. Baronet, as he had said, claimed credit for having secured the ratification of the Treaty, but he should rather come down to the House in a white sheet and express shame and regret at having made such an illusory and delusive instrument. The ignorance of the Government had been most considerable and most ample throughout this business. On the 31st January 1893, the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not know that there was any case against Balfour for fraud. When the right hon. Gentleman was asked why he had given the Chiltern Hundreds to Jabez Balfour, he replied: "I had no means of knowing he had committed a series of frauds." Well, everybody else knew that, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not. The Treaty had failed, and the expenditure of the £6,400 had failed. This sum had been very badly expended, for he would undertake to say that any competent financier who had to get Jabez Balfour back to this country would have got him back for £4,000 or £5,000 without the slightest difficulty and without any Treaty whatever. The fact that the Government had spent £6,400, and were still without their absent friend, proved that they did not know how to spend the money of the country. He thought the Government were becoming aware of the importance of this question. He noticed that the Under Secretary was very warm in his answer the other night, and he now understood the reason. The hon. Baronet in his guilty conscience knew he had failed where he ought to have succeeded. He knew the hon. Baronet was as able a man as they had had at his post, but like all other Under Secretaries he was the plaything, the victim, and the slave of the Office, and the failure was the failure of the Office. But this £6,400 had to be provided by the House. He, for one, would be no party to providing money for a failure of this kind, and if his hon. Friend went to a Division he should certainly vote with him. There had been and still was a serious and grave aspect of suspicion over the whole of this case, and that was the reason why not less, but more caution should have been exercised by the Government, and why not less, but more ability should have been shown. He believed that if the Government had exercised proper pressure on the Argentine Republic, Jabez Balfour would have been in this country long ago. The Government sent ships to ports of other countries in order to protect or enforce the claims of British subjects, and surely they could show equal energy to obtain so great a criminal as this.

MR. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) observed that the hon. Gentleman who had last spoken had not very distinctly told them what he wished the Government to do. So far as he understood the hon. Member, he said he, as a competent financier, would be ready to take a contract for the return of Jabez Balfour to England, and he explained to them how he would do it. He would go in command of a ship, or a yacht, or something of that sort. He had no doubt the Government would enter into reasonable terms with the hon. Member if he would do the thing cheaply and effectively, and with some sort of guarantee that he possessed all sorts of facilities for bringing back Jabez Balfour, or for joining him in Argentina. The hon. Gentleman had blamed the Government for not having agreed to the proposal of the Argentine Government, that they would give up Balfour on condition that the Government of this country would equally give up any Argentine fugitive from justice who had come to England. They knew perfectly well that political matters were mixed up with the offence of every fugitive from justice from South America, and he was, therefore, glad that the Government did not take upon themselves the obligation to surrender such offenders. The hon. Gentleman also complained of the Chancellor of the Exchequer having said that when he gave the Chiltern Hundreds to Jabez Balfour, he had no means of knowing that he had committed any offence. But what means of knowing could the right hon. Gentleman have had? The right hon. Gentleman might have read in the newspapers that something had occurred in connection with the Balfour Companies, but it would be absurd if, on a general statement like that, the Chancellor of the Exchequer refused to give Balfour the Chiltern Hundreds. In fact, he was very glad the right hon. Gentleman gave the thing to Balfour, because it relieved them of the presence of the man. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham seemed to be under the impression that Balfour had necessarily escaped by getting a collusive action brought against him. But how did the right hon. Gentleman know that?

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL: That is admitted. The person who brought the action has abandoned it.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said it was perfectly true that Balfour was the sort of man to get up collusive proceedings; but, on the other hand, it was extremely probable that, having arrived in Argentina, Balfour commenced to rob there just as he had robbed here; and, therefore, it was not at all clear that the proceedings were collusive. He would point out further, that the Argentine Republic was in this matter precisely in the same position as the United States. If we were to demand the extradition of anyone in the United States, and if the Attorney General of any particular State were to bring an action against that individual, the United States would be obliged to wait until he had purged himself of that particular offence before they could take measures to have him sent back to England. The same provision existed in all our own Extradition Treaties. Therefore, though he should be very glad to see Balfour brought back to this country, he could not see that the Government had been in any way remiss in the matter.

*Sir EDWARD GREY said, there was just one new point raised by the hon. Member for King's Lynn to which he desired to reply. The hon. Gentleman said that two years ago the Argentine Republic were ready to extradite Jabez Balfour if the Government promised reciprocity. But if the Government had done so they would have given a promise they could not have fulfilled. In the very same paper from which the hon. Gentleman quoted, there was a communication from Lord Salisbury as Foreign Secretary, dated 16th September, 1890, in reference to the case of James Cope, who was wanted for forgery and embezzlement, and had escaped to Argentina. Lord Salisbury pointed out that in applying for the surrender of Cope, the Government were not in a position to promise reciprocity, because the law of extradition did not enable them to extradite fugitives from Countries with which Great Britain had not concluded treaties.

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES said, Lord Salisbury, nevertheless, concluded his communication by asking for the surrender of Cope as an act of international comity. Why did not the present Government do that in the case of Jabez Balfour?

*Sir EDWARD GREY: Because the Argentine Republic refused to surrender Cope as an act of international comity.

*Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said, he thought this matter should be debated without the introduction of matters which prevent hon. Members from taking an impartial view of it. He failed to grasp the significance which the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs seemed to attach to the refusal of the Argentine Republic to surrender Cope in the time of Lord Salisbury's Government. The Liberator frauds were of world-wide notoriety, and he hardly thought it probable that the Argentine Republic would be likely to have treated an application for the surrender of Jabez Balfour on the same ground as they treated the application for the surrender of an obscure criminal, of whose existence the rest of the world were unaware. He might appropriately, by way of illustration, mention that there was an international reciprocity prevailing amongst the sporting communities of the world, by means of which a person guilty of an offence against the turf laws of one country, was debarred from exercising his calling in any other country; and it was only fair to the Foreign Office that it should be known, as evidence of difficulties to be contended with in the case now under discussion, that the only country in the wide world in which this international system of turf comity did not prevail, was the Argentine Republic. It fell to his lot a few years ago, while discharging official duties in connection with the chief turf authority in England——

*The CHAIRMAN: Order, order. I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman that his argument does not apply.

*Mr. JAMES LOWTHER only mentioned the matter to show that there were difficulties in the way of the Foreign Office in dealing with the public spirit and public opinion of the Argentine Republic which he was bound in fairness to state. But he should add that he believed that if some firmness had been displayed by the Government the surrender of this criminal would have been long since attained. Some earnestness of our intention to obtain the surrender of Balfour should have been shown to the Argentine Republic. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton asked what evidence there was that the charge now preferred against Balfour in that country was collusive. Why, the charge—some trifling alleged fraud—was the laughing-stock of the world. It was a notorious fact that the witnesses on which the public prosecutor relied had run away, and that therefore all his evidence had disappeared. The House expected some assurance from the Government that when those bogus proceedings against Balfour came to an inevitable collapse they would see that that individual did not remove himself to some other and more secure part of the Argentine or some of the other neighbouring Republics. The Member for Haggerston made some statements which he thought he was justified in making, as to the supply of funds to Jabez Balfour from a particular source, and he did not understand that the denial which was given to imply that some assistance had not been afforded from some source or other during the absence of the fugitive. He thought prompt and immediate steps should be taken—without anything in the shape of coercive action or naval demonstration, such as his hon. Friend the Member for King's Lynn expressed his readiness to contract—to show that we were in earnest in the matter of this surrender.

Sir D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyll) said that there was not sufficient evidence to justify Her Majesty's Government in charging a friendly Government with deliberate fraud. The whole gist of the question lay in the absence of proof of collusion on the part of the Argentine Republic. They, most of them, believed that it was not altogether a straightforward prosecution, but they were not able to prove that, and therefore Her Majesty's Government had practically no power, and it was useless to discuss the question at great length.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked if the Report of the proceedings which took place at Salta would be laid upon the Table. He thought it was very necessary that hon. Members should have an opportunity of reading them. Neither side of the House, he thought, made any charge against the Argentine Government. The real fact was, as had been stated by Mr. Welby, at Buenos Ayres, the good fame of the Argentine Republic demanded that the country should not be used as a refuge for criminals. If this matter were pressed energetically on the Federal Government of Argentina he believed Jabez Balfour would, before very long, be extradited.

*Sir EDWARD GREY said, the matter had now arrived at a point at which the public had a right to expect that there should not be longer delay in dealing with the case. As soon as the point had been reached at which the proceedings should terminate, or any serious cause of complaint that delay had occurred arose, they should be prepared to publish papers.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said the whole principle, in dealing with extradition, was based to a large extent on the degree and character of the offence. He heartily concurred in what had been said as to the excessive tenderness on the part of other Governments and our own in dealing with matters of extradition. Why should there be any unwillingness to surrender criminals? It was the duty of the Foreign Office to be vigilant in securing the power of extradition. There were some cases in which extradition treaties did not exist between our own and foreign countries, and he hoped that there would be no delay in obtaining these treaties.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER asked the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs if an efficient watch was being kept over the fugitive. He had read statements in the newspapers to the effect that the inspector in charge of the case had returned to this country, but he supposed arrangements had been made for another to take his place?

*Sir EDWARD GREY said another officer immediately took the place of the inspector who had left Argentina. He thought he ought, in order to prevent any mistake, to say that of course the responsibility for the detention of Jabez Balfour must rest with the Argentine Republic, and that this country could not possibly exercise any administrative power in Argentina.

*Mr. C. J. DARLING (Deptford) said he did not think the majority of those on the same side of the House as himself were satisfied that the Government had done as much as possible to secure the extradition of this accused person, and under the circumstances he thought it was absolutely necessary to go to a Division on the matter. The other night, in answering his remarks, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs appeared particularly anxious to have it understood that he, and others acting with him, were perfectly satisfied of the honesty of Her Majesty's Government in this matter. He, of course, could never have intended to impute any want of honesty to them. Why, one of the last acts of Mr. Jabez Balfour before he went away was to constitute a company that had for its object the guaranteeing of the honesty of persons in positions of trust and confidence. In the formation of that company there were associated with Mr. Jabez Balfour two Members of the present Government, and Mr. Francis Schnadhorst. How was it possible, then, to doubt the honesty of those who were prepared to guarantee the honesty of others? He concluded by moving to reduce the vote by £5,000.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 106; Noes, 167.—(Division List, No. 21.)

*Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Lowestoft, Suffolk) wished to put a question to the Government with reference to the very peculiar case of Dr. Herz. The money of the British taxpayers was still being spent in maintaining the arrest of Dr. Herz, and apparently in perfectly futile proceedings. He would repeat the question which had been already asked whether the Government could not bring in a short Bill to enable the Bow Street magistrate to go to Bournemouth, where Dr. Herz was lying ill, and hear the case there, or make a representation to the French Government expressing their opinion that the time had come when the proceedings against this man should be dropped. Apart from the cruelty inflicted upon the man himself, he thought some decisive course should be taken in the matter.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby) said, the Government were fully alive to the expense and inconvenience of the present situation, and they would carefully consider what course could best be taken for bringing the matter to a termination.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) complained that the Estimates gave no details of the kind of expenses, legal and otherwise, charged in connection with the extradition proceedings against Jabez Balfour. Usually a footnote was inserted giving the items, but it was absent in this case. No information was given to show how much of the sum charged in the estimate was expended in the actual extradition proceedings, or how much of it was absorbed in Home Office expenses.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, the sum of £4,000 or £5,000 seemed to be an enormous amount for counsel's fees in this abortive attempt to secure the extradition of Jabez Balfour. Had the money been paid to Argentine counsel or to English counsel sent out to conduct the proceedings? At any rate, the money had been spent in unsuccessful litigation, and in the circumstances the Committee ought to have further information.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) wished to correct a misapprehension under which the Attorney General laboured, in his reply on Tuesday night. He did not accuse the Government of winking at this case. That serious charge was made by the hon. Member for Haggerston, who sat behind the Government. His charge was that the Government had shown considerable and even gross neglect of opportunities, which a keen and active Government would not have lost, for preventing Jabez Balfour from escaping from this country, and thus of avoiding all these expenses. The Report of the Official Receiver was made in October or November 1892, and was in the hands of the Board of Trade some time before Jabez Balfour applied for the Chiltern Hundreds. The general fact was brought to the knowledge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the application for the Chiltern Hundreds, but when the right hon. Gentleman was pressed in January 1893 to explain how he came to allow this notorious person to receive the Chiltern Hundreds, and why the Government did not take steps at least to have him watched, the Chancellor of the Exchequer could only say that he had no alternative but to grant the Chiltern Hundreds. That, however, did not explain the inaction of the Law Officers and the Board of Trade during the period after the Official Receiver's Report was made. Someone must be responsible. Hon. Members would recollect how the House was put off during the whole of last year with flippant answers to every question addressed to the Government on the subject. Sixteen months were allowed to pass before the Government made up their minds to prosecute those responsible with Jabez Balfour for these alleged frauds. He did not blame the present Attorney General, but one or other of his predecessors must be responsible, as well as either the present or the late President of the Board of Trade. It was impossible that the Government as a whole could escape responsibility for the delay in attempting to prevent Jabez Balfour's escape; possibly for delay in pressing the Argentine Government for his extradition; and, certainly for delay in deciding to prosecute those who were responsible with Jabez Balfour. It was on account of that delay that he had charged the Government with neglect, and that charge he repeated now.

*Sir EDWARD GREY said, he was in error in stating £30,000 as the sum involved in the proceedings against Jabez Balfour at Salta. He ought to have said £3,000.

*The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir J. T. Hibbert, Oldham) assured the hon. Member for Islington that he did not desire to say anything in the least offensive to him. The hon. Member objected to this expenditure, because he said it was abortive. This £4,000 was paid to a first-class counsel in Argentina, in respect of all law charges there. To say that the efforts of the learned Gentleman were entirely unsuccessful was not quite correct, because he succeeded in obtaining a decision that Jabez Balfour could be extradited under the Treaty.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN asked whether the action in reference to the £3,000 at Salta, was not a civil action?

*Sir EDWARD GREY said, he understood there was a civil action. It had been withdrawn, but inasmuch as Jabez Balfour entered into the contract under an assumed name, he was on that ground charged with fraud.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN said, that that comes to this—that the civil action having been withdrawn, nothing remains but this charge of fraud trumped up by the Procurator Fiscal?

*Sir EDWARD GREY: The Procurator Fiscal insists on going on with the charge.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: Surely, that is most absurd. There ought to be the strongest protest agains these proceedings.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether Jabez Balfour was under detention on the charge of using a false name, because, under the Treaty, that was the only bar to an application for extradition.

*Sir EDWARD GREY: Yes, he is under detention.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: Then it comes to this—that the only thing that prevents Jabez Balfour from coming back to his friends is, that he has used a false name in Argentina.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER said, he did not quite understand the Under Secretary's statement that the police officer now charged with the special duty of watching Jabez Balfour, had no administrative powers. Of course he did not suppose that Balfour was in the custody of this officer, but what was the officer's position? Had he any authority from the Federal Government or the Provincial Governments, or any means whatever of watching Balfour's movements. Did he "shadow" him? Was his status and position recognised in any way, either by the authorities of the Republic or of Salta. There was a general belief that as soon as these collusive proceedings were at an end the vigilance of the Salta authorities would cease and Balfour would become a free man.

*Sir EDWARD GREY: The Provincial Authorities are bound to hand him back to the Federal Authorities.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER said, Balfour had been handed over by the Federal Authority to the custody of a rival and independent authority. He desired to make quite certain that the Government recognised the facilities for escape which this position offered, and he, therefore, asked what means the English officer had at his disposal to prevent escape.

*Sir EDWARD GREY said, the inspector of police was sent out to bring Balfour back without delay when he was handed over. But the sole responsibility for Balfour's detention in the Argentine Republic rested with the Government and the authorities of that country. Any attempt on their part to interfere with the administration of the Argentine Republic would bring about a very serious international question in which they would be entirely in the wrong.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER said, it now appeared that Jabez Balfour had been taken from the Federal, and been placed in the custody of the Provincial, Government. Was the Government going to take any steps to prevent the escape of the culprit from the Provincial Authorities before the Federal had an opportunity of rearresting him? Could the Under Secretary give the Committee any assurance upon that point?

Major L. DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield) wished to know whether Balfour ever was in the charge of the Federal Government, because if he was, and they handed him over to the Provincial authorities instead of extraditing him, there was a distinct ground for interference.

Mr. VICARY GIBBS (Herts, St. Albans) understood the hon. Gentleman to say that the Foreign Office did not know whether this was a collusive case or not. But, having regard to all the appearances, were they endeavouring to ascertain whether there was collusion? He could not imagine any mercantile house dealing with the Argentine Republic, and having an agent in the country, being in doubt about the matter for a single moment. They would not have had a shadow of doubt after six months, and without spending anything like the sum the Government had expended. The point he wished to press was whether the hon. Gentleman would point out to the Argentine Government the fact that appearances were such as to produce the unanimous impression in this country—with the solitary exception of one hon. Member in the House—that there was collusion. That was not an impression which should be created between one friendly power and another. Further, would the hon. Gentleman endeavour to see that no more actions of this kind occurred? He thought the Committee was entitled to have an answer to the question which the previous speaker had put.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) thought it a remarkable fact that in spite of the prosecutor having withdrawn from the case, the Provincial Government should still carry it on. As yet they had had no information from the hon. Gentleman on that point. Was it a usual practice for other Governments to carry cases on after the prosecutions had been dropped? The whole of the crux of the matter was whether there was collusion or not, and as yet there had been no information given the Committee stating that the case would be carried on in a *bona fide* manner to the end. The Foreign Office seemed to be as ignorant about the matter as they were, but he hardly thought that was really so. Was it in accordance with the usual practice of the Provincial Government to continue prosecutions after the prosecutors had ceased to act?

Mr. P. A. MUNTZ (Warwickshire, Tamworth) asked when the fresh charge was started. Was it before or after the Federal Government had expressed their willingness to hand Balfour over, because if it were stated subsequently the fact would have a very strong bearing on the question of collusion.

*Sir EDWARD GREY was not quite certain, but believed they were started subsequently to signing of the extradition order. As to the question of custody, Jabez Balfour had been in custody in the same place all the time he had been in custody. The provincial authorities were bound to surrender him to the Federal authorities as soon as the case was decided, but as to the other point which had been raised, the hon. Member was practically asking him to accuse a Foreign State of being engaged in collusive proceedings. The Government had taken those steps which they considered right to take, and it must be recollected the merits of the case had to be gone into in accordance with the due legal process of the Argentine authorities. They could not go behind those legal forms, but they had asked that there should be no undue delay in the settlement of this matter.

Mr. VICARY GIBBS did not want the hon. Gentleman to insult the Argentine Government; but surely his diplomatic powers were not so limited that he was unable to convey to that Government the impression existing in this country. The Government ought to have taken steps before to ascertain whether there had been collusion, and have put pressure upon the Salta Government to bring this matter to a conclusion. As that course, however, had not been taken, he felt justified in moving the reduction of the Vote by £100.

*Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) wanted to know whether the Government was represented by a watching brief in these proceedings, because he could imagine no better way of being able to judge whether these proceedings were real or not. A large sum of money, something like £4,000, had been spent in the matter, but he could not make out what had been done with it. How did the Provisional Government get hold of Jabez Balfour? The hon Gentleman had told them the Federal Government had him in custody originally, but had the Provisional Government got superior powers of arrest?

Mr. VICARY GIBBS said he must press his motion to a Division.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY said, they were entitled to an answer to the question—what had been done for the money? No one would pay a lawyer £4,000 or £5,000 and neglect to inquire what he had done for the amount paid him. Outside, people were very anxious to know all about this transaction.

*Sir EDWARD GREY said, he had dealt with this point twice before. His view was, that this was not a point on which they had a right to press the Federal Government. What they had a right to press was, whether the legal forms had been carried out with as little delay as possible. The expenditure of £4,000 was due to the necessity of engaging Counsel to make an application which was contested at every point. The point was as to whether, under the Extradition Act, which came into operation after Jabez Balfour was in the country, he should be given up or not.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY said, his question had not been answered. Could the Under Secretary assure them that the usual course had been followed, or was the practice adopted simply *ad hoc?* If this was the case, it looked like collusion.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 57; Noes 131.—(Division List No. 22.)

On the Supplementary Vote of £35,000 for the Relief of Distress in Ireland,

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT explained that the Government had taken this Vote out of its usual order. The previous evening the Chief Secretary stated to him that he was obliged to go to Ireland, and his right hon. Friend asked him whether he could place this Vote in an early position for to-day. He was anxious to meet the wishes of his right hon. Friend, and accordingly he had put the Vote down to come after the Vote which had just been taken, due warning having been afforded by a notice to hon. Members on the Notice Paper. The Chief Secretary remained in the House until half-past six o'clock, and as the train left shortly after eight o'clock he was compelled to leave the House. But his right hon. Friend had asked him to appeal to the Committee to take the discussion on this Vote, not at present, but when the Vote on Account came on. This Vote on Account would be brought forward in the course of next week. The Chief Secretary had been obliged to go to Ireland, where he would obtain additional information on this subject, and his right hon. Friend felt sure that he would be better prepared to deal with the subject after interviewing representatives from different portions of Ireland, than he would have been had he remained and taken charge of the Vote to-day. He trusted, therefore, that considering the distress in Ireland, and the position in which his right hon. Friend had been placed, the Committee would agree to postpone the discussion until a future stage. In the Vote on Account, £33,000 would be asked for this relief in addition to the present sum, and thus there would be the fullest opportunity afforded for discussion.

MR. EDWARD CARSON (Dublin University) said, he should be sorry to appear discourteous to the Chief Secretary, who, no doubt had important business to attend to in Ireland; but he could not refrain from reminding the Government what had taken place in the House during the past two or three Sessions. The Closure had been moved on certain occasions, and on each occasion very important matters remained to be brought before the House; but the only reception which had been accorded to the complaints of hon. Members was that they could not discuss those questions then. He was prepared, however, notwithstanding the previous attitude of the Government to make an offer. It was to this effect, that if the Committee postponed the discussion on this important Vote, would they undertake to give sufficient time to discuss the question on the Vote on Account? The Vote on Account contained a number of other items, and if the parties who were interested in the earlier items chose to discuss them for the greater part of the allotted time, then his experience had been that the Closure was applied, and the subsequent Votes received no discussion whatever. Hon. Members interested in those Votes had no alternative but to discuss them in August or late in the Session; and to this course they strongly objected.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT undertook that an opportunity would be given to discuss this portion of the Vote on the Vote on Account.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER hoped that this would not be done at the expense of other subjects. The right hon. Gentleman was, no doubt, aware that there were other subjects of great importance due for discussion, and for which no other legitimate opportunity was afforded other than the Vote on Account. The offer of the right hon. Gentleman, therefore, came to this, that the House was to devote the time which might be disposed of on other subjects to this Vote, which the Committee had an opportunity of dealing with now. There was an item to which he was prepared to call the attention of the Committee—namely, the large proportion of what in the commercial world was called "expenses of management." More than one-seventh of the whole Vote came under this head. That subject alone would need a close scrutiny on the part of the Committee.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Hon. Members would have the same opportunity of discussing this question on the Vote on Account.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) said, that after their experience of last year, it must be understood by the Government that the Opposition could not allow any opportunity of discussing this important matter, or any aspect of it which could be raised in Committee, to pass by. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not think that he desired to obstruct; but he was anxious to know when the Government expected to take the Vote on Account.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: Some day next week.

*Mr. C. B. STUART-WORTLEY pointed out that on that occasion the right hon. Gentleman might not be master of the situation. It was impossible for him and his hon. Friends to banish from their minds the recollection of what had occurred on previous Votes on Account, and the unexpected eagerness developed by hon. Gentlemen supporting the Government in the earlier and less important items to discuss them so fully that the opportunity had been taken away from other hon. Members to seriously debate later items on which it was desirable to have a Debate. He suggested that a discussion might be secured if the Government would undertake to allow it to be taken on the Report of the present Vote. The item might be put down as the first order, or at least not taken later on some evening than a reasonable hour. There was another way in which the Government might secure a discussion—namely, by leaving this item out of the Vote on Account and bringing it forward as a separate Vote altogether.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY hoped that the Government would not listen to these suggestions. The Committee had now obtained possession of this Vote, and it was competent to discuss it at this moment. It was no use whatever to have any more understandings. The Opposition had been treated very badly by the Government on the Vote on Account during the past two years; they had always been closured, and their experience led them to suppose that the same thing would happen this year. The Government might promise not to closure the Vote on Account, and yet, after all, they might arrange to take it, as they had done before, on the last day before the holidays. He hoped, therefore, that no bargain would be made, and that the Committee would at once proceed to discuss the Vote.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, that the mention of Vote on Account had a very uncomfortable sound to the ears of Members of the Opposition. During the last two years he and his hon. Friends had been deeply dissatisfied with the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of this Vote, which had either been closured or put down for a later day; and in various ways the Opposition had been precluded from discussing the Vote on Account. They desired to raise several important questions, and this consideration hindered them from giving up the opportunity they now possessed of discussing the Vote.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY said, that practically the whole time of the House had been given to the Government, and this was the only opportunity they had of discussing these points. Members of the Opposition were continually accused by the Government of raising obstructive questions, but they had no opportunity of raising certain questions except on the Estimates. Last year he had several points he wished to bring up, but he was closured. There was the great question of Education, the question of Mr. Sadler, and others which would take a considerable time on the Vote on Account. This present Vote was one which not only concerned Ireland but England. It was a large Vote to confer certain advantages upon Ireland. No doubt the expenditure was wise and good, but they must remember that there was such a place as England, and England had to find this money. Ireland did not find it. When questions affecting the English agriculturist were raised the Government ignored them. He represented a poor district in England which would have to find its share of this money (a district in which there was much distress and want of employment) and he claimed that he had a right to take the only opportunity he had of raising the questions he desired.

Mr. EDWARD CARSON hoped, as this was a large Vote some fuller explanation would be given than appeared on the Estimates, of the purposes for which it was intended. At present they had only the bald and naked statement that it was "for the relief of distress in Ireland." He would like to know on what principle the districts were selected in which the money was to be applied; what the districts were, and what special case had been made out on behalf of each.

A gentleman residing in the locality brought to his knowledge the other day that, in Killarney, there was a large amount of distress existing which was almost unparalleled in other parts of Ireland, and he undertook that, on the first opportunity, he would ask for some definite information as to the amount of distress existing there. He was particularly anxious to know what reports were made to the Chief Secretary before £29,500 was paid to the various districts and what was the ratio of distress in those districts. He presumed that they could get that information and a detailed account of all that had been done with the £29,500. For his own part, as an Irish representative, he must say, from all the reports that had reached him, that he was not inclined—if the money was properly spent on permanent works —to think that it was at all ill spent. He did not at all agree with his hon. Friend behind him as to poor districts in England subscribing largely to these funds in Ireland. For his own part he should be glad to see the £29,500 increased to £100,000 or £150,000. The money would be very acceptable in Ireland, having regard to the statements made from the Ministerial Benches during the progress of the Home Rule Bill as to the bad way in which Ireland had been treated in the matter of finance. Passing from that, he came to the £5,500 required for the salaries and expenses of inspectors and others specially employed. The expenditure of £5,500 in administering relief works to the extent of £29,500 seemed to be an extravagant proportion. How had the £5,500 been spent? He assumed that it had been spent through the Local Government Board. The Local Government Board in Ireland had already a large and efficient staff. They had several inspectors in every county in Ireland, who were permanent officials, getting substantial salaries, and these inspectorships were much sought for. Was he to be told that when they spent £3,000 or £4,000 extra in a county—and he supposed the £29,000 represented so many thousands per county—it was necessary to add to the large staff of inspectors that existed already; and that before they could dole out this money for relief works it was necessary to appoint additional inspectors to carry out the works? There were quite sufficient permanent inspectors in Ireland to spend—not only £29,500, but three times that amount, if necessary; and he hoped before the Vote was passed the Secretary to the Treasury would see that the Committee were entitled to something more than the bald statement that £5,500 was to be paid to persons specially employed. He wanted particularly to know, if permanent inspectors had been employed, whether they had so much work cast upon them that they were unable to carry out this extra expenditure in the various counties. He should certainly be amazed to be told that their work was so great in the various counties where distress prevailed that they were unable to carry out these works. With whom rested the appointment to these inspectorships, which seemed somewhat lucrative, and what were the qualifications of the various gentlemen who were appointed to them? Had they been appointed temporarily, or had the permanent staff been added to! The sub-heads, giving the details of the Estimates, really supplied no information at all. He must not be taken as in the slightest degree opposing the expenditure of £29,500 in Ireland. He was glad it should be spent there. It was little enough, judging by the accounts he received of distress prevailing. With regard to the distress in England, English Members could call attention to that at the proper time, and he submitted that it had nothing to do with this grant for Ireland. To put himself in order he would conclude by moving the reduction of the Vote by £5,500 the salaries and expenses of the inspectors and others.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) reminded the hon. and learned Member for Dublin University that these inspectors were nearly all Conservatives and sympathisers with the Tory policy in Ireland. The Irish Local Government Board, in appointing these inspectors, often appointed land-grabbers, and persons of that kind. If the hon. and learned Member were in favour of this expenditure on relief works in Ireland he showed it in a curious way by moving the reduction of the Vote by the amount of salaries of persons whom he might console himself were sympathisers with his Party in Ireland.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT regretted that the Chief Secretary was not present to explain the details of the Vote. But in his right hon. Friend's absence he would do the best he could. He was surprised that his hon. and learned Friend, while expressing sympathy with the object of the Vote should have proposed to reduce it. They all knew that money expended in relief works, whether in Ireland or elsewhere, wanted carefully watching and looking after. This was not more necessary, however, in Ireland than anywhere else. There was always a liability when State money was given for any purpose—not only relief of distress—that some of it might be wasted, and he, himself, thought the appointment of these extra inspectors was very necessary to see that none of the money was wasted. His hon. and learned Friend seemed to suggest that only £29,500 was being spent upon the relief of distress in Ireland. The amount proposed to be granted for the purpose was £80,000. £35,000 was to be taken now, and in the Estimates for next year there would be a further sum of £45,000. This money was required owing to the failure of the potato crop, which was more or less serious, he was informed, in about 50 western unions. Therefore, the whole of this money would have to be spent during the next two or three months. It was desired to give relief to those who had lost their potato crops, and also to provide seed for next year. As to the sum of £5,500, it was to be thus divided:—£4,000 was allotted for the salary and expenses of 15 seed inspectors, who would hold office for a limited period. They were each allowed Three Guineas a day while at work, including hotel expenses; and on Sundays the payment was reduced to One Guinea. Then three temporary inspectors were provided for at the rate of £300 a year each, 15s. a night being allowed for hotel expenses. These gentlemen would not remain for the whole year, but only as long as they were required for the expenditure of the money. Contingencies were reckoned at £300, and thus produced a total of £5,500. With the money which had been already granted, there were now 64 relief works in actual operation in the north-west and west of Ireland, distributed over the unions of County Mayo, County Galway, and County Donegal. There were none at present in the Killarney district. The number of families benefited by employment on these works was 3,500, representing 17,500 individuals. The earliest works were begun on January 28, in Ballinrobe union, and were followed at intervals by the others. Additional works would be opened in four other unions in Counties Mayo, Donegal, Cavan, and Galway. The works now in progress consisted of the repairing and fencing of public roads, and, in some cases, of the making of new roads. The reports furnished to the Government were those on which the different relief works were based, and showed the unions where the relief was most needed. On the information at present before the Government there seemed to be no sufficient reason for anticipating the occurrence of abnormal distress in Clare, Limerick, Kerry, and West Cork, and at present works there had not been begun. So far, the measures adopted by the Government were intended to afford relief to the class of small farmers who had been deprived of their means of subsistence by the failure of the potato crop. It was not intended that the works should deal with chronic distress. He had shown that the money asked for was likely to be properly spent; and for his own part, he did not in the least object to having a large staff to supervise the expenditure of the money. Where public money was being spent, such supervision was necessary, because the experience of the past showed that money spent in relief works had been wasted right and left. Though £5,500 seemed a large sum for the management of the relief works, he believed that it was a wise expenditure, and that it would lead to economic results.

Amendment negatived.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, that he had given notice, earlier in the Sitting, that he should move a reduction on this Vote, but he hoped hon. Members for Ireland would not think that in so doing he was showing hostility to the Vote. He was aware that the distress in certain districts of the west of Ireland was chronic, and that as long as Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom, the one country would have to help the other. But he represented an agricultural constituency, which was almost as much in need of extraneous help as any part of Ireland, and he wished the Government to remember that there were distressed districts outside of Clare, Kerry, and Donegal. What his constituents resented was not that this money should be granted to Irishmen, but that a distinction should be made by the Government between Ireland and other agricultural districts. What was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. The Government neglected what opportunities they had of assisting Essex last Session.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is going further than the lines which I indicated. The discussion must be confined to this Vote.

MAJOR RASCH said, that if the Government would take the condition of his constituents into consideration in the future he would be satisfied.

MR. R. W. HANBURY said, that the argument of his hon. Friend applied also to the town population in England. He did not for a moment grudge this relief to Ireland, and he had no doubt that the money would be well spent. But it did strike him that the claims which Ireland had upon the Ipmerial Parliament for relief works was considerably lessened by the fact that the Government now in power was pledged to remove the Parliamentary connection between the two countries. The claim did not stand on so good a foundation as that for relief works in England, Scotland, and Wales. How was it, when there was distress both in Ireland and England, that means were found of relieving that distress in Ireland, and of finding work for the unemployed, while it was constantly declared that such relief would not be afforded to the unemployed in England? The Committee was entitled to some information from the Government as to the precise nature of these works. In this Vote there was no precise information. They were told as to roads; but what were the other works that were indicated? The statement was a great deal too general; and he complained strongly of the way in which these Supplementary Estimates were drawn up. The information given was of the most meagre description. A long list of names of places had been read; but as he did not know the places the names did not convey any definite idea to his mind. They had not before them a fairly sufficient statement of what the works were to be. He wanted to know the nature of the works precisely, so that if an emergency of the same kind arose in England or Scotland, we might know what kind of work we should be able to provide for Scotch or English unemployed. Parliament was fairly entitled to know how far experiments in Ireland might be made applicable to the other two countries. He did not expect from the right hon. Gentleman the same information that might be given by the Chief Secretary if he were present. It was candidly admitted that the sum allotted to management was a very large proportion of the whole; and, owing to the technical form in which the Vote was presented, there was no reason why a much larger proportion should not be taken for management without the consent of the Treasury. The rule in these cases was to divide a Vote by sub-heads, and then, with the consent of the Treasury, money could be transferred from one sub-head to another; but in this case there were no sub-heads, and, therefore, double the sum stated could be spent on management, without obtaining sanction from the Treasury.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY thought that this Vote required a good deal of consideration, inasmuch as so large a proportion of the money was to be taken for salaries—£35,000 was asked for in one sum for the relief of distress in Ireland, yet no less than £5,500 was to be expended in salaries. In this case the Treasury had gone out of their way to put the items in one lump sum. Of course they were willing to do anything they could for the relief of the distress in Ireland, but to spend 20 per cent. of the Vote in salaries seemed to the ordinary business man somewhat peculiar. He was a member of the Committee which was sitting to consider the question of the relief of the distress in this country, and one of their chief difficulties was to find some means by which that distress might be relieved; but here, without any Committee or any investigation at all, this very large sum was being voted by the Government for the relief of distress in Ireland. He had always heard that one of the main principles insisted on was that Ireland should be governed in exactly the same way as England, but here they had a very large Vote for the relief of distress in Ireland, while, although there was an immense amount of distress in England, no Vote was proposed to be given for its relief. This money was to be supplied by those in England and Scotland who were at the present time in extreme distress owing to the condition of trade, and he considered it a serious question whether these large Votes should not be considered on the principle that the United Kingdom was one country, and whether large measures of relief should be granted to Ireland when they are not granted to England? Those who represented English constituencies had a right to say that, as the money had to be raised by public taxation, the same principle ought to apply to the whole of the United Kingdom. He was not himself an advocate of large relief works. He thought that the result of them was extremely doubtful. Anybody who had had to do with charitable work could say that there was nothing in the world more difficult than to apply large sums of money wisely and well. The Committee ought, therefore, to have some definite idea of how this money was going to be expended. Having made charitable relief a study for a long time, he could say that one of the great difficulties in Ireland at the present time was that the people had come to depend on outside assistance on every occasion on which distress arose. The Committee ought, in his opinion, to require from the Government absolute and precise information as to the way in which this money had been expended, and whether it had been expended in such a way as would tend to foster habits of thrift and industry, rather than to make the inhabitants of Ireland more and more dependent on relief.

Mr. GEORGE WHITELEY (Stockport) suggested that as this money was advanced proportionably by the United Kingdom, some consideration ought to be given to the question of how the finding of the money would affect the industries of the country, which at the present time were so very much depressed. The right hon. Gentleman had told the Committee that part of the money would be devoted to providing seed potatoes. He would put it to the right hon. Gentleman whether the distress which existed in agriculture in Ireland was comparable with the distress in Lancashire or in the tin-plate trade in South Wales?

*__Sir J. T. HIBBERT__: Yes.

Mr. G. WHITELEY was surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman, as a Lancashire Member, say that. At any rate, this money had been found proportionably by the United Kingdom, and such a vote had indeed the most peculiar significance at the present time. One had heard recently the vote of money advocated to assist distress in this country. Many had declared that such votes were a financial failure, but now the position was being given away. A precedent was being set up which might have to be followed in this country. This sum of £70,000 was to be given to Ireland, a country very much smaller than Great Britain, and which contributed a comparatively small sum to the national Exchequer. With reference to the amount to be paid for the supervision of the works undertaken, he asked whether in any private business the expenses of the management of an undertaking would be between 16 and 20 per cent. It was monstrous that the cost of the supervision of these works and of the disbursement of this money should be anything like 20 per cent. of the sum of money voted. Over £1,000 a year, besides travelling expenses, was being paid to the inspectors engaged in administering this fund. Their work was not comparable with that of a borough surveyor in a provincial town, who obtained for his services only £600 a year. The Chief Secretary for Ireland ought to consider seriously whether so very costly a staff was necessary for the distribution of this Irish distress grant. It had often been urged by Committees of that House that sums of money ought only to be advanced to relieve distress when they were met by equivalent grants from the local authorities or the Unions of the districts in which the money was to be spent. The voting of this money would benefit local authorities throughout Ireland, for road-making would be undertaken at the expense of the taxpayer instead of at the expense of the local ratepayer. If the local authorities had to contribute themselves a sum equal to that obtained from this grant they would be interested in seeing how the work was done, and in all probability the improvements would be affected at a more moderate cost for supervision than was at present contemplated.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES said, they were all ready to treat Ireland with generosity and kindness. [An Irish MEMBER: "Oh!"] They were not at all disposed to refuse money for the relief of the Irish distress, but they could not shut their eyes to the fact that this was a very large sum that was asked for, and that the cost of distributing it was to be extraordinarily large. He wished to contrast the conduct of the Government in dealing with Ireland with their conduct in dealing with England. There was distress in England, but instead of proposing to give England £70,000, the sum ultimately to be given to the Sister island, the Government only gave us a Select Committee. That was not a just distribution of benefits between the two islands. He wished to know how much of this money was to be expended on road works and how much on other works. Fishing was one of the most important industries in which Irishmen could engage, and in following that industry they had sometimes suffered through the want of adequate harbours—no doubt also sometimes through want of assiduity. Was any portion of the sum to be voted to be applied to the maintenance and repairs of fishing ports? Unless a fisherman could go to a suitable port with his catch, all his labour was thrown away.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT explained that a great portion of the works undertaken were road works, but there were also cases of work on piers. For example, in the Clifden Union a protection wall was being built against the sea, and a pier was being repaired.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether these were piers or harbours?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: No; small piers for fishermen.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: Landing places?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Yes. A great deal had been said about the form of the Estimate and about the sum which was put down for expenses and the salaries of officers. The Estimate was based upon a Supplementary Estimate laid before the House by the right hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Jackson) when the late Government was in Office. If the Estimate was good in those days it ought to be good in these, although he admitted that they ought to improve upon the methods of the late Government. He would therefore take care that there should be no risk of further increased amounts being put down for salaries or for the payment of additional inspectors without the authority of the Treasury. He would do his best to protect the interests of the taxpayers. Generally, he might say that the question whether it was desirable to spend money on relief works in England and Scotland was not now before the Committee; the question was as to spending money for relief works in Ireland. These works were pressing, urgent, and necessary. Large masses of people, through the unfortunate weather of last year, had lost the whole of their potato crop, and had nothing to depend upon, and they must either starve or get relief from the State. Of course they might go to the workhouse, where they would be provided for, but he thought all parties desired to treat Ireland in a sympathetic way, whether they had Home Rule or not. And he should say that those who opposed Rome Rule ought to be the first not only in voting this money but even in giving a larger grant than was proposed by the present Government.

MR. J. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) concurred entirely with the remark of the right hon. Gentleman as to the duty of Unionists, in connection with Votes of this kind, to deal not only justly but even generously with any demands that were made upon Parliament from Ireland. But the position of English Members was not made easier for them by the action of the Government or even of hon. Members from Ireland, for when the hon. Member for King's Lynn began his speech with a remark in a similar sense, it called forth no recognition from Irish Members of the spirit in which it was made, but a jibe and a jeer from one of their number.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Oh, nobody minds him!

MR. J. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN went on to observe that English and Scottish Members, who were conscious there was much and bitter distress among their own constituents, had a hard case to answer when they were asked to vote public money, to which their constituents had to contribute, for the relief of distress in Ireland, whilst at the same time it was declared that this House could and would do nothing for the relief of distress in this country. The only protest made against the Vote had come—not from a Unionist, but from a supporter of the Government. For the Government's own justification, as well as for that of hon. Members, he wanted to know what was the distinction they drew between distress in England and distress in Ireland. Why was there to be £70,000 voted for Irish distress whilst no Englishman need apply for any? The Government said these people for whom this money was to be voted had exhausted their supplies, and were in a state of destitution. Why, in his own constituency he knew of people who had never been fortunate enough to have any supplies against bad times, who were absolutely dependent from week to week on what work they could get, and who, owing to the frost, had been out of work and in a state of destitution for weeks past. He asked for information to assist him to explain to these men, when he met them again, why this exception was made in favour of Ireland.

*Sir J. LENG (Dundee) said, one would suppose, to hear the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down and others, that the House of Commons was about to embark upon a new departure in dealing with distress in Ireland. It seemed a little inconsistent, and not a little strange, that they would not give to Ireland the management of her own finance and would not intrust Irishmen with the power to deal with their own distress. In this matter the Government was only doing what previous Governments had done and what hon. Gentlemen in former years had supported. Legislation for Ireland would continue to be exceptional, whatever Government might be in power, until they confided to Irishmen themselves the control of their own government, and the power to meet such claims as were now made upon the Imperial Parliament.

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) declared that the question of the hon. Member for East Worcestershire was so much in the nature of a challenge that it was hard for Irishmen to sit silent. The hon. Member, who was but a young Member of the House, and probably not a very experienced student of politics, seemed to consider there was a *prima facie* case for considering Great Britain and Ireland on a common level, in regard to their claims for the mitigation of distress, by subvention from the public purse. He wished to tell the hon. Member with all respect that the reason why Ireland stood in a different position was because Ireland, which, when she was left to her own guidance, was a tolerably prosperous country, was plundered by England, which took upon itself the management of Ireland's affairs and the expenditure of her money. And he wished to remind the House that the ordinary public revenue of Ireland before the Union was 5s.; now it was 34s. The result of the Union had been to increase fourfold the burden upon Ireland. Taxation, Imperial and local, exhausted the resources of Ireland, left the people no means of accumulation and no means of dealing with her own distress; and it was because of the system which had been imposed on Ireland, against the will of her people, that Irishmen were obliged to come here, and, in the guise of beggars, ask for a miserable dole out of their own money for the relief of their own distress.

Vote agreed to.

On the Vote for £10 for Salaries and Expenses in connection with the County Courts,

Mr. R. W. HANBURY expressed his satisfaction at seeing, by the mere fact that a Supplemental Estimate was required, that these Courts were being used more and more every year. He would urge upon the Government the desirability of moderately increasing the jurisdiction of such Courts. He did not think that at the present moment the number of persons who had the opportunity of obtaining redress in them was anything like as large as it ought to be, and if their jurisdiction was extended cases could be then tried of much greater importance, as far as the money value was concerned, than it was possible to try in the County Courts now. He hoped it was the intention of the Government to add to the efficiency of these very valuable Courts, which were much resorted to by smaller suitors, and whilst increasing the jurisdiction enjoyed by the County Court Judges, their Courts might be made the stepping-stones to their filling higher places on the Judicial Bench.

*MR. CYRIL DODD (Essex, Maldon), on a point of Order, desired to know if it was competent for the hon. Member to raise the question of the whole policy of the County Courts on a Supplementary Vote for £10? It was an important question, and one which, he agreed, ought to be raised at whatever was the proper time for raising it.

MR. HANBURY: May I ask whether it is not the fact that not only on the Supplemental Vote, but on the main Vote on the Estimates, we only vote a small surplus amount like this? I contend, therefore, that if we cannot discuss this on a supplemental we cannot discuss it on the main Vote.

SIR R. TEMPLE: May I also point out that, although we are only voting £10, yet the increase of expenditure during the year has been no less than £20,000?

*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. H. J. ROBY): I think on a Supplemental Vote merely for paying a small amount, in excess of the amount, already provided, that this matter ought not to be raised. The general question should be raised on the main, and not on supplemental Estimates.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY desired to raise the point as to whether the charges in these Courts were not very excessive. The Vote was for £10 to meet an expenditure of £20,010, and they had £20,000 received as fees. The whole Estimate for the year was £444,030, and no less than £430,000, or nearly half a million of money were received, in fees. That being so, were not the real costs to those who had to use the County Courts very excessive as compared with the costs incurred by litigants in the other Courts? Small litigants had frequently complained to him that the expenses of the County Courts were very large in proportion to the money services rendered. A great many of the plaints in County Courts were for small debts, and it was worthy the consideration of the Committee whether they were justified in making these small litigants pay practically the whole cost of the law charges which had to be defrayed in carrying on these Courts. He would ask whether some plan could not be adopted by which the excessive number of little charges would be relieved, so that the costs to smaller litigants might be lessened?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, the hon. Member for Preston asked whether increased jurisdiction should not be conferred on the County Courts. He did not say that was not a question to be discussed and considered in that House, but it was, he thought, too large a question to raise on a Supplemental Estimate for such a small sum. With regard to the complaint by the hon. Member for Islington, he quite agreed that a large amount was received as fees for suitors in the County Courts, but great advantage and economy had been derived by small suitors from the establishment of the County Court system. Previously they were obliged to pay much greater expenses in their suits than was the case now; and though he would not say there were not cases amongst small suitors in regard to fees which were not worthy of consideration, still this was a matter for the consideration of the Lord Chancellor rather than of the Treasury. It was a legal, involving a financial, point. Without saying it was not a matter which should not be considered, he did not think that at the present time any very great grievance existed with respect to the amount of fees, because for 1894 there was an increase of 17,000 plaints as compared with 1893. That did not look as if the fees prevented people having recourse to the County Courts. This large increase might have occurred to a great extent owing to the depressed state of agriculture and trade all over the country. In depressed times people were more pressed for money, and the result was that more County Court suits were instituted for enforcing the payment of outstanding debts. There was no doubt the people liked the County Court system, and they took advantage of it to a very large extent.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY was much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his explanation. He had told them that it was owing to the general depression that there had been so many more suits. But inasmuch as the expenses were paid by these people upon the one side or the other, one side must lose and pay them, so that it really meant that very small suitors were paying nearly £500,000 a year for the collection of small debts. That raised the question whether, in regard to the smaller plaints especially, some relaxation might not be made in the matter of fees, and he thought the right hon. Gentleman rather agreed with him upon the subject.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) asked whether it was not time to put a stop to this system of paying Officers by fees, and pay them by salary instead?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT replied that, as far as was possible, the Officers of those Courts had been placed on salaries. But it was not found possible to do so in all cases, and that was why the fee system was, to some extent, still retained.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, that in the City of London, where the Municipality managed the Court, and did not pay its Officers by fees, there was a large profit out of the Court, whereas there was a loss on all the Courts controlled by the Crown. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether it would not be better to place all those Courts under the charge of the Municipalities?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, he thought not.

MR. HANBURY said, that, undoubtedly, the salary system was much the better. He would like to know whether the fee system prevailed to any considerable extent, and why it was thought necessary to continue it?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT replied, that the matter was entirely under the control of the Lord Chancellor, and not under the control of the Treasury. He had no objection to drawing the attention of the Lord Chancellor to what had been said on the subject.

Vote agreed to.

SCOTCH LAW CHARGES.

On the Vote for a supplementary sum of £5,125 for Law Charges and Courts of Law in Scotland,

Mr. G. C. T. Bartley.

*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, a Supplementary Estimate was a disagreeable necessity, and all Governments desired to avoid it as much as possible. But he noticed that there was an increase in the remuneration of the Lord Advocate, the Solicitor General, and the Clerk to the Solicitor General; and he desired to know what was the reason that this increase was not foreseen during last Session, and included in the ordinary Estimate?

MR. W. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield) also asked for an explanation of one of the items of the Vote—for a sum of £3,000, which, it was said, was required owing to a change in the system of accounting?

SIR W. HARCOURT: With regard to the question of the hon. Member for Wigan, I have to state that it has been, for a long time, felt that the remuneration of the Law Officers of Scotland has been entirely inadequate. It was strongly pressed upon me, naturally by the late Law Officers more than by the present Law Officers, that the inequality of the remuneration of gentlemen who had given up their private practice, and had necessarily to reside in London, as compared with the remuneration of the Irish Law Officers, should be redressed. The matter was brought to my consideration towards the end of last Session, when I felt that the salaries of the Law Officers of Scotland should be placed on their present footing, and that is why a Supplementary Estimate is necessary.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER said, he was not disposed to quarrel with the decision at which the right hon. Gentleman had arrived. Indeed, he thought the inequality should have been long since redressed. Until recently the Lord Advocate was the sole Representative of Scotland in the House; but, having been relegated to a secondary position in the House, he thought the Lord Advocate should be allowed to retain his position at the Scottish Bar.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES, referring to the extra sum of £3,000 rendered necessary in the office of the Procurator Fiscal, owing to a change in the system of accounting, said, he noticed that it was for one quarter of the year the sum was claimed. But he found, on referring to another part of the Paper, that the original Estimate was £18,500 for the whole year, and he was unable to see how anyone could have arrived at £3,000 as the quarter of that amount. It seemed to him that £4,625 should be the sum.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, the change in the accounting was made on the suggestion of the Auditor General, who wished to bring all the accounts in question within the year. It appeared that those accounts were always a quarter in arrear, and, therefore, in order to bring them within the year, it was necessary to provide for five quarters' payments in the current financial year in which the change had been introduced.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: My point is not that the sum represents five quarters, but that it is considerably less than a quarter.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: That is a matter of accounting.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY: It seems to be the same as Mr. Lowe's Income Tax, who got five quarters out of the year.

SIR F. S. POWELL asked whether the regulations affecting the Scotch Law Officers allowed them to take private practice?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan and Kinross): They are entitled to take such private business as they can attend to without in any way interfering with the performance of their public duties, as the Irish Law Officers are.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he did not object to the increase in the remuneration of the Scotch Law Officers, as he had no doubt they were better men than the English Law Officers. But, looking at the matter from an economical point of view, he should rather have seen the salaries of the English and the Irish Law Officers reduced to the scale of the Scotch Law Officers.

SIR F. S. POWELL asked whether "the duties to the public" referred to by the Lord Advocate were supposed to be discharged in London or in Edinburgh?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (SIR G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, it had been the custom in past years for the Scotch Law Officers to take what private practice they thought it right to take. He certainly did not make any criticism in regard to any of the Scotch Law Officers of the past; but he thought it right to say what his right hon. Friend the Lord Advocate could not say, perhaps, that when his right hon. Friend came into Office, on the very meagre salary which he received, he gave up a splendid practice in Scotland, to spend day after day, week after week, month after month, at the Scotch Office, attending to his business as closely as in the days when the Lord Advocate was the sole administrator of Scotch affairs. He was quite certain that his hon. and learned Friend would not, in accordance with the Treasury Minute, go to Scotland during the Session to take private business. Any business which, during the Recess, fell to the lot of the Scottish Law Officers they would be allowed to take. But they might be quite sure that under the new dispensation the Lord Advocate would give the whole of his time to Parliamentary work. With regard to the Solicitor General, the Treasury Minute had been drawn up with a little greater latitude for obvious reasons, as he had to attend to the Government law business in Edinburgh, for which there were no fees whatever. The Solicitor General was frequently obliged, therefore, to go up to Edinburgh. He hoped this explanation would be satisfactory.

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER said, that on some points the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman were satisfactory. In former days, when the Lord Advocate was the only representative, so far as the House was concerned, of the Scotch Executive, his continuous attendance in Parliament was a necessity, in order that questions might be addressed to him, but he failed entirely to see why the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland should, under the present arrangements, need the attendance of the Law Officers on either side of him. He would ask if it was likely that in future the Government would get the best members of the Scotch Bar to devote themselves to the public service when they were practically precluded from following up their private practice. He spoke as a layman in regard to the matter, but he did not think it likely that the best interests of the public service would be secured by such an arrangement. As he understood it, one of the Law Officers had to go backwards and forwards to Edinburgh during the Session, not to keep himself in touch with the Scotch Bar, nor with his ordinary practice, but for Government business, for which he received nothing at all. That was to say, that for his fixed salary he had to do whatever he was told, either to remain in London, or go back to Scotland, as circumstances might dictate. That seemed to him to be a very one-sided arrangement. It might answer on the present occasion, but he did not think it was an arrangement likely to secure the best legal talent in the future. He could not subscribe to the doctrine that the Secretary for Scotland laid down, that he ought to have two Law Officers in attendance upon him. [Several hon. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear!"] If the hon. Member for Somersetshire had any articulate observation to make, no doubt the House would be glad to receive it.

MR. T. C. T. WARNER (Somerset, N.) said, he had made no observation, articulate or inarticulate, since he came into the House.

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER said, that as to the first category named by the hon. Member, he could confirm his statement from his own knowledge; as to the latter, he readily accepted his assurance, but when he was interrupted he only wished to point out that if an arrangement of this kind had been assented to by the Committee generally, it might have been considered as having received the assent of the House.

MR. R. W. HANBURY said, the answer of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland came as a surprise to many Members on that side of the House. When they saw this increased vote on the Paper for the Scottish Law Officers they naturally assumed that it was conceded to them on the same terms on which an increased salary had been also conceded to the English Law Officers—namely, that they should not in future privately practice. This was not merely a question as to their Parliamentary work, or their not practising during the Session; it was a question of principle, and he thought the same principle ought to apply in both cases. It was an unsound principle to pay certain Officers of the Crown high salaries, and at the same time allow them to carry on their private professional business. They had carried their protest in the case of England to a successful issue, and he hoped any future Government would adhere to it. But the same rule ought to be applied to the Scottish Law Officers, and he would therefore move to reduce the Vote by £100.

MR. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy) said, he quite agreed with the hon. Member for Preston that it was a sound principle to lay down, that the Law Officers of the Crown ought not to carry on private practice while in Office. But if they insisted on this condition being observed, they should, in fairness, make the position of Law Officer sufficiently remunerative as not only to get the best talent, but to induce the leaders of the Bar to abandon private practice on entering the service of the Crown. The condition was made in the case of the English Law Officers—["No, no!"]—except in relation to such exceptional cases as those in which they held briefs at the time of their appointment. Practically, therefore, they abandoned private practice while in Office, and when the condition was made, their salaries were increased considerably. What was the case with regard to Scotland? The salaries of the Scotch Law Officers were miserably low compared with those of the English Law Officers—in one case £2,000 a year as compared with £9,000 a year a least. The predecessor of the hon. and learned Member who now occupied the Office of Solicitor General for Scotland, received the miserable salary of £900 a year, and the holding of the Office involved so great a sacrifice to him that he felt bound to give it up. He would give one fact by way of illustration. In the recent well-known case of Monson, who was charged with murder, the Solicitor General for Scotland prosecuted for the Government. Now, it was a fact that the gentleman who defended Monson got more on his brief for that trial, which lasted a week, than the Solicitor General would get as a Law Officer for the whole year. Was he to understand that hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House would be prepared to make it worth the while of the Law Officers to give up private practice? [*Opposition cries of* "Hear, hear."] Then, if that were so, he only hoped the Government would note this expression of opinion by the Committee, and consider the matter in framing the next Estimates. It was well worth consideration whether an arrangement could not be carried out to meet the case which would be satisfactory to all parts of the House.

Sir HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton) hoped that, under the circumstances, the hon. Member for Preston would not press his Amendment. Surely the hon. Member did not desire to put himself in an ungenerous position with regard to the Scottish Bar. It might be urged that the salaries of the Law Officers of Scotland should be much less than those of England because Scotland was much smaller than England, but surely they should be paid at the same rate. The present salaries of the Scotch Law Officers were generally admitted to be on an extremely moderate scale, and, for his own part, he would much rather further increase than reduce them. He was sure the Secretary for Scotland must have carried with him the sense of the Committee in the most lucid explanation he had given with reference to the position of the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland, and he hoped the Amendment would be withdrawn.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT (Oldham) said, the hon. Member for Preston had said that those Estimates had taken him by surprise. He could only state that the Minute dealing with this matter was laid on the Table at the end of last Session.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY said, he had moved the reduction of the Vote in order to assert a principle, and with a view to getting, if possible, the salaries of the Law Officers of England, Ireland and Scotland placed on a sound and permanent basis. He quite agreed with the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy that if the Law Officers of Scotland were to be denied the right to private practice while in Office, their salaries should be increased in fair proportion. Their present salaries, enlarged as they were, were not by any means adequate if they were to be denied the right to take private practice. He could not allow, however, that the Law Officers of Scotland should be paid at the same rate as the Law Officers of England. [An hon. Member: "Why not?"] Scotch talent was, no doubt, as great as English talent, but the Scotch Law Officers had not as many opportunities of exercising their legal talent as the English Law Officers had. No one could contend that private practice was as valuable in Scotland as in England, and therefore the salaries of the Law Officers should not be so high in Scotland as in England. But a proportionate salary ought to be agreed upon His object was to place the salaries of the Law Officers on a permanent basis.

*Sir F. S. POWELL said, he had heard the reply of the Government in great surprise, because he naturally thought this increase of salary was to be accompanied by the same conditions that attached in the case of England. He believed that private practice interfered with the discharge of public duties.

Sir E. CLARKE: No, it does not.

*Sir F. S. POWELL said, that was his opinion.

*Mr. M. H. SHAW-STEWART (Renfrew) hoped the hon. Member for Preston would not press his Amendment to a Division. If he did he would have all the Scotch Members on both sides against him. It might be true that the Law Officers in Scotland had less practice than the Law Officers in England, but the Solicitor General for Scotland was very often a young rising lawyer, and a prospective Lord Advocate, and it was in the interests of the Scotch Law business that the Solicitor General, whose presence was not always required in the House, should keep in touch, by private practice, with the Courts in Edinburgh.

Mr. CYRIL DODD (Essex, Maldon) also hoped the Amendment would not be pressed to a Division. He thought they were all agreed that the Law Officers in England should not take private practice, and that if the Scotch Law Officers were as amply remunerated as the Law Officers in England they should be placed under the same restriction. But they were not so well paid, and they were obliged to be in England during the Sitting of Parliament, and consequently would not take private practice in Scotland. The private practice they had hitherto taken had generally been of a kind which did not clash with their public duties—private practice in the House of Lords. While in favour of the principle laid down by the hon. Member for Preston, he suggested that this was not a favourable opportunity of raising the question.

Sir J. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street) said, he had some hesitation in intervening in the Debate, because this was peculiarly a Scotch question. He thought the Scotch Law Officers were paid very much less than the English Law Officers in proportion to the duties they performed. It was quite impossible to expect to get members of the Bar to give the best advice to the Government unless the Government was prepared to pay for it. When they considered the great disadvantages under which the Law Officers would be placed if they were prevented from taking private practice he thought it was absolutely necessary if they were to get the best talent to advise the Government that they must pay, at all events, a fair and reasonable equivalent. He had always been astonished that the Scotch Law Officers should be content to go on with the miserable pittance, they had received up to the present time for the duties that they had to perform. The only reason that he could find why these gentlemen had been content to accept the small salary they had hitherto received was that they believed that the position they occupied was a stepping-stone to something better. Take the late Solicitor General for Scotland, who had been receiving something like £900 a year for the last 13 years. He had been deprived to a large extent, owing to particular circumstances, of promotion, and no one would persuade him (Sir James Joicey) that the £900 a year he had received was a fit and proper compensation for what that gentlemen had sacrificed. He was no great friend of Scotchmen, particularly after the Question that was asked to-day with regard to Mining Inspectors in Scotland. The Home Secretary was asked whether he would insist upon the appointment of more Mining Inspectors for Scotland, and that Scotchmen alone should fill these positions.

*The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must confine himself to the Question before the Committee.

Sir JAMES JOICEY said, he was giving this as an illustration, and he thought it was a fair illustration of the question they had to deal with. He was no friend of Scotchmen in this matter, but he must say that the Law Officers for Scotland had not been fairly treated. He hoped the Government would reconsider this question. He believed that it was often a very great disadvantage to the Government that the Law Officers should be allowed to take private practice. But, if private practice was prohibited, he trusted that the Government would compensate the Law Officers in such a way that they would, at all events, have to submit to no real financial sacrifice. He believed that in giving a good salary to the Law Officers they would get the best men to advise the Government.

Mr. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said, that, rightly or wrongly, pluralism was becoming very unpopular with public bodies throughout the country, and he trusted that the hon. Member for Preston would press his Amendment to a Division unless the Government gave a practical pledge that they would take this matter into their consideration before the next Estimates were presented. The Government had already affirmed the principle of "One man one job." It was a very good principle, not only for the employer, but for those barristers who were now unable to get briefs, simply because the star artistes at the Bar, especially at the Parliamentary Bar, had five or six jobs in one afternoon, with the result that they were unable to fulfil any one of them. He trusted they would see their way to follow the example of what had been done in the case of the English Law Officers—namely, that no private practice should prevail. They had no right to have Law Officers to look after the business of the country, when perhaps there might be some fat briefs to pay them better, and then of course there would be a deputy to do the Government business. While some 80 per cent. of barristers were unemployed he did not think they should assent to dual salaries or incomes, and he should vote for the Amendment unless the Government gave a pledge to rearrange this matter in next year's Estimates.

*Mr. H. S. FOSTER said, there was evidently a feeling in the Committee that the principle which had been applied to the English Law Officers should be applied to those of Scotland, and it was a curious thing that the only way in which they could assent to an increase in the salaries was to vote for the reduction of the Vote. That was a rather curious anomaly, and he hoped the Government would save them from it. An hon. Member had said that they could not expect distinguished lawyers to make sacrifices in undertaking Government work, but, as a matter of fact, they knew of several cases where distinguished lawyers had accepted Judgeships at considerable pecuniary loss. He should like, however, to see the same principle applied to the Law Officers in both countries, and hoped the Government would make some such declaration in the matter as would save the Committee going to a Division.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) said, a statement made by the hon. Member for Battersea obliged him to take part in the discussion, which otherwise he had not intended doing. That hon. Member had suggested that the Law Officers had, by the attraction of fat briefs in private practice, neglected the interests of the public, and the due performance of public work. He wished to say at once, both on his own behalf and on that of the right hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight—with whom he had served in the law offices of the Crown for a longer period than any other Law Officers for the last 100 years—that such an accusation, if applied to them, was absolutely without foundation.

MR. J. BURNS: Does the hon. and learned Gentleman deny that the right hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight, whilst a Law Officer of the Crown, took up a brief for *The Times?* Did he do his best for the public then?

SIR EDWARD CLARKE said, that with both his right hon. Friend and himself it was an unbroken rule during their term of Office that public work should come first, and no public work was ever neglected for the sake of private practice. If the attraction of private work had ever disturbed him in the course of public duty, he should have dismissed it unhesitatingly, and have devoted himself to that work for which the country paid him. But such a thing never occurred, and on no occasion during the history of those six years could it be said that either in opinions given to the Government on important questions which arose for the Law Officers to deal with, or in the matter of the representation of the Government in trials in Court, had there been any failing whatever on the part of his colleague or himself in their duty to the Government. To his mind, the remark of the hon. Member for Battersea was a personal imputation.

*THE CHAIRMAN thought the hon. and learned Member need not assume that imputations had been made; and, although he did not wish to interrupt him, was obliged to point out that he must confine himself to the question before the Committee.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE thought that, under the circumstances, he might claim the indulgence of the Committee. With regard to the Law Officers for Scotland, he thought they were inadequately paid; but there was no occasion for them to surrender their private practice. They were compelled to be in London for the purpose of discharging their Parliamentary duties, and most of the work which came to them while Parliament was sitting was in connection with cases heard in the House of Lords, where their appearance involved no interference with the proper discharge of their public duties. He had not intended to take part in the discussion, but it was impossible for him to remain silent while imputations had been cast upon the conduct of his right hon. and learned Friend and that of himself during their term of Office.

*MR. H. T. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrews Burghs) supported the appeal not to press this question to a Division. It appeared to him that the Motion of the hon. Member opposite was made on somewhat inconsistent grounds, because the increase of the salaries was made and accepted by the right hon. Gentleman and his hon. and learned Friend on the express understanding, under the Treasury Minute of last August, that they should not engage in private practice if it prejudiced the public service. He should support the Vote as it stood, and he hoped the Amendment would be withdrawn.

MR. R. W. HANBURY said, his one object in moving a reduction was what happened as to the practice of allowing Law Officers of the Crown not only to draw large salaries, but to engage in private practice. If the House abolished the private practice of the Law Officers, then their salaries should be increased.

He fully saw the difficulty there was in raising the question by moving a reduction. In spite of the support, then, that he had got, he thought he might prejudice the case by going to a Division. He should like to have some promise from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the matter would be considered by the Government, and that the same conditions would be enforced as to the Law Officers of Scotland and Ireland which were enforced as to the Law Officers of England. He appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give them some hope, at any rate, that this sound principle would be applied all round.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn, and Vote agreed to.

The following Votes were also agreed to :—A sum of £5,125 for Law Charges and Courts of Law in Scotland ; £500 for the Register House, Edinburgh.

On the latter Vote,

MR. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) hoped that clerks from the outside would be employed rather than overwork the staff.

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN said, sometimes the clerks were harder worked than at other times, but he should see that there was no abuse.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

On the Vote for £136,199 for Public Education in England and Wales,

MR. CYRIL DODD said, he desired to move a reduction of this Vote, in order to call attention to what was, he thought, a real grievance. They would see that the first item of this Vote was for an additional sum in respect of the annual grant for the day scholars. The annual grant was nearly 4 millions, so that the total amount of this grant was very large indeed. Now this grant was paid to the voluntary as well as to the Board Schools. In many places there were only voluntary schools, and many of these, to the credit of the Church of England be it said, were voluntary schools of the Church of England. Nonconformist children had to attend these voluntary schools, but they were protected by the Education Act of 1870. But when any of these children from time to time desired to become pupil teachers, there was no protection in the shape of a conscience clause, and they were obliged to conform. They were selected by the managers, and in many instances a candidate was not chosen if he did not conform. The practical result was that if they wanted to become pupil teachers they must, at least for the time, give up their Nonconformity. This, it had been represented to him by many Nonconformists, was a real grievance. It was represented to him that this grievance had a bad effect on the younger people whom it concerned. He was told that in order to become pupil teachers some Nonconformist children affected to give up their Nonconformity and affected to conform to the Church of England, though in many instances he was told that this was not by any means a real conformity. But whether it was so or not he thought the Committee would agree that the State, which was giving to the Voluntary Schools those large grants for day scholars, should see that there was no injustice inflicted on any of the children of the State, whether Church of England or Nonconformist. He concluded by moving the reduction of the Vote by £189, in order to call attention to the reality of this grievance.

*MR. ALBERT SPICER (Monmouth), said, on behalf of his fellow Nonconformists throughout the country, this was really a larger question than he thought his hon. Friend had realised. There were 10,000 parishes in the country where only Voluntary Schools existed, and where therefore it was practically said to every Nonconformist at the present time, "you are debarred from looking to education as one of the means of earning your livelihood." He thought that this was a great injustice to the Nonconformists of the country. It was besides inimical to the best interests of education. There were in a large proportion of those 10,000 parishes young men and women growing up who would be glad to serve the Voluntary Schools loyally under a Conscience Clause in connection with the education of those schools. There were many young persons of good education who would be glad to have the opportunity of employment in their own districts. Having served in a district of

Essex for 12 years on a School Board, where they had taken over in a perfectly friendly way, several Voluntary Schools, he knew some of the difficulties which Voluntary Schools suffered in obtaining the services in many country districts of sufficient teaching power, If they could allow the Nonconformists to have a Conscience Clause with regard to teaching, not only would a great injustice be removed but it would be a distinct benefit to the educational system of the country.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said, that in one respect he agreed with the hon. Member. No doubt there was some difficulty on the part of the Voluntary Schools of the country obtaining sufficient teaching power ; but this defect was due rather to the want of money, which was so lavishly squandered on the Board Schools, and with which the Voluntary Schools competed. He acknowledged, however, that the Vice President had done them a good turn in the Code with regard to tests. But he contended that the remedy was not to be sought in the direction which the hon. Member had indicated. The hon. Member pleaded that the Nonconformist children were not protected by a Conscience Clause. The great mass of the children in country Voluntary Schools, however, were Church of England children. ["No, no."] He would leave Wales aside, but, taking England as a whole, he asserted that the vast mass of the children attending country Voluntary Schools belonged to the Church of England. The schools existed for the children, not for the teachers. The teachers were there to bring up the children, the most important part of whose education, as every one admitted, was the religious education. This being so, it naturally followed that the teaching staff should belong to the same denomination as the children who were taught; and that was the system on which they had hitherto proceeded in their schools. He desired at the same time to extend the same measure of justice to the schools of every other denomination. Take the Roman Catholics, for example. Did anyone believe that any hon. Member from Ireland would allow the Roman Catholic children to be taught in the Irish schools by anyone but Roman Catholic teachers? No; they would resent it in the highest degree. What, therefore, was true of the Roman Catholic Church was also true, though not to the same extent, of the Church of England schools. So long as Church of England schools taught Church of England children, so long ought the teachers to belong to the same faith. If there was any large portion of Nonconformist children in those districts by all means let them have schools of their own. Indeed, he would be prepared to advocate an advance of public money being granted in order to assist the Nonconformists to build their own schools.

MR. ACLAND said, he had only to deal with the law as it stood—which was that if in any given school district, where there was a single, or a couple of schools belonging to the same denomination which were sufficient for the wants of the district, practically there could be no other schools. He reminded the hon. Member for Monmouth that the whole of the arrangements of the Education Department were based on the condition that the managers, whether of Voluntary or Board Schools had still power to appoint teachers. It would be almost impossible to carry on our educational system if that were altered, because it would it would involve the Education Department stepping in and saying that a certain class of teachers should be forced on the managers. Although he fully sympathised with the difficulty, everyone would regret that any promising boy or girl who wanted to enter the teaching profession should be prevented from doing so, and staying at home, which was what they desired in the earlier stages. Still he was afraid the difficulty was almost inevitable however regrettable under the present law and arrangements in regard to the schools.

*Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts., Mansfield) said, he did not know where the noble Lord obtained the statistics on which he based the statement that the vast majority of the children attending the schools belonged to the Church of England. He forgot that the schools existed in 10,000 parishes where there were no other schools and where Nonconformist children had to attend. It did not follow that the vast majority of the children belonged to the Church of England and not to the Nonconformist bodies. But he wished to call the attention of the Committee to the extremely sectarian view which the noble Lord took of the functions of the Voluntary Schools. They had been led to suppose that they existed for the benefit of the villages in which they were provided. Instead of that it was now asserted that they had been erected simply for the benefit of the Church of England.

Viscount CRANBORNE: I expressly said these schools did not exist for the Church of England, but for the children belonging to them.

*Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS: But it had always been supposed that these schools existed for the benefit of all the children of the village. If not, how was it they had to deal with the fact that there were no other schools in the village? The root of the evil lay in the fact that the Education Department would not recognise the existence of any other school in a parish in which there was a denominational school. The object of the hon. Member for Maldon Division could not be secured until this monopoly for the benefit of the Church of England had been abolished, and the right of all classes in the villages was recognised to have schools provided for them by the State in which their conscientious convictions would be respected.

Mr. VICARY GIBBS said, that if he understood the hon. Member correctly he said that if Nonconformists desired to build Voluntary Schools where Nonconformist children were to be taught they would be unable to get a site, would the Minister for Education tell the Committee whether this was so? He himself believed it was the direct reverse of the case. He did not know why the hon. Member for Mansfield should attack the sectarian views of his noble Friend. He put forward the natural and common sense view that the schools existed not for the benefit of the teachers but of the children. It was a most ludicrous idea that these schools should be looked upon as primarily for the purpose of raising teachers. They were primarily for the teaching of children. He should like to have an answer from the Minister for Education as to whether the statement of the hon. Member for the Mansfield Division was correct—that Nonconformists, if they desired to build a voluntary school in a parish, could not obtain the same facilities from the Department as could the Church of England.

*Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, N.) said, that that the hon. Member for the Mansfield Division had argued that the real root of the grievance was that in districts where there were voluntary schools the Department would not recognise additional school accommodation. The fact was the other way about. All Governments, in administering the Education Act—and particularly Sections 18 and 98—interpreted it to mean that in a School Board area no additional accommodation could be recognised, though it were provided by a voluntary school, unless it were sanctioned by the School Board. Therefore, the grievance was in the other direction to that asserted by the hon. Member.

Viscount CRANBORNE said, that he had found the Article in the Code which bore on the question. It stated that in a district not under the School Board a school was not deemed to be unnecessary if, during the twelve months preceding the date of its application for an annual grant, it could show an average attendance of not less than

30 scholars. The only exception was with respect to a special grant. Therefore, in a voluntary school district any denomination could set up a school if they could get 30 scholars.

MR. CYRIL DODD said, he understood that, as the law stood, the managers had the absolute right to appoint the teachers. It was obvious, therefore, that on his present motion he could effect no useful purpose, and he begged leave to withdraw it.

*SIR W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford) said, that he was rather astonished at the attack which the hon. Member for the Mansfield Division had made on his noble Friend, Viscount Cranborne. The hon. Member seemed to have sadly forgotten the whole history of this great educational question. When he complained of the existing system, the hon. Member forgot that the whole elementary education of this country from 1808 to 1870 was carried on solely and entirely by those who introduced the voluntary system at immense cost and sacrifice. In this, the eleventh hour of the educational system, the hon. Member made a violent attack on the noble Lord because he had stated his view of the present state of affairs As to the grievance in regard to pupil teachers, many would be glad to find some solution to the difficulty. If there were a good pupil teacher in any village or town it was a great pity that by a technical objection his services were rendered unavailable. But it was not for the Department to interfere, and if it were to begin taking such action in the appointment of teachers, &c., the gravest difficulties would arise. Having said so much, however, he must add that he regretted the tone of the hon. Member's speech. He forgot the sacrifices which had been made in the past—sacrifices of money, lands, and church buildings—to keep up the voluntary schools; and he forgot that the change made by Mr. Forster's Act of 1870 was to supplement voluntary effort by the Board schools. With regard to these educational questions, whatever difficulties might arise, he hoped that for the future they would be discussed in the House without Party heat and feeling.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. H. S. FOSTER moved a reduction of the vote by £500. He wished to enter a protest against the system of pressure which had been adopted by the Department under the administration of the present Vice-President towards the largest and most important branch of elementary education—that which was in the hands of the voluntary schools.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must confine himself to the annual grants for the day schools and day scholars. The general policy and administration of the Department will not come under the Vote.

MR. H. S. FOSTER said that the Education Vote was generally put off till the end of the Session, and passed absolutely *sub silentio*. As he understood that he was precluded from discussing the general policy of the Department, he would content himself by saying that on every occasion that the forms of the House would allow he and his friends intended to raise these questions. There had been the deepest interest excited by this particular Vote, which was the largest in the Supplementary Estimates. An original Estimate of £5,900,000 had been exceeded by £136,000, and he should like to know what proportions of the excess were on account of payments to Voluntary Schools and Board Schools respectively, and how far the excess in the expenditure over the Estimates was on account of grants due to schools withheld from them, kept out of the original Estimate, and which it had not been possible any longer to withhold. That some of the excess had arisen under this head he was certain; and he would adduce facts which would show it. According to a statement published in *The Times*, the federation of Voluntary Schools for Northumberland had recovered £900 which had been improperly withheld from 28 schools in 1894; and he should be glad to have official information of the circumstances under which it had been possible to recover £900 that had been improperly withheld.

*THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. Member was going into questions that were beyond the Vote. It was concerned with the annual grant for the average attendance and the fee grant for day scholars.

*MR. H. S. FOSTER said the action he was speaking of, was that grants earned had been withheld and subsequently paid. He had no doubt that the Supplementary Estimate was in no small measure due to the withholding of grants which had been ultimately paid through the increased activity of the supporters of Voluntary Schools. By exerting pressure in and out of Parliament, they had recovered grants which had been wrongly withheld. Two or three cases had occurred in the Lowestoft Division. [*Cries of* "Order."]

*THE CHAIRMAN said the policy and action of the Administration were not under discussion.

*MR. H. S. FOSTER said he felt the great difficulty of discussing a single topic without dealing in some measure with the policy involved in particular acts. He was speaking of the money grants to these schools. They were asked to vote a further £136,000, spent by the Department in grants to schools. [*Cries of* "Order."]

*THE CHAIRMAN said the Supplementary Estimate was due to an under estimate of average attendance and of the rate of grant payable thereon.

*MR. H. S. FOSTER said he was discussing the rate of grant and that was just where he submitted he was in order. The grant earned by some schools had been improperly withheld from them. These were inconvenient facts for hon. Gentlemen opposite who desired to avoid discussing them, as they had shown by closuring an Amendment to the Address and secondly by failing to keep a House. The cases he was going to cite, and which he submitted to the Chairman was absolutely in Order upon this Vote, included instances in which the grant was earned and would have appeared in the original Estimate if the Department had sanctioned it; but sanction was refused. It had relation to schools at Lowestoft, and feeling it his duty to bring the circumstances under the notice of the House, the present offered the most fitting opportunity for doing so. The first instance was that of the Christchurch Infant School, at Lowestoft. This school down to the time of the accession of the present Vice-president to Office had always been regarded as an excellent school——

*THE CHAIRMAN: I must request the hon. Member not to continue that line of argument.

*MR. H. S. FOSTER said, of course, he was bound by the Chairman's ruling. If it was the ruling that he would not be in order in alluding in any way to the policy of the Department—[*Cries of* "Order"]. Hon. Members would, perhaps, allow him to finish his remarks. He ventured to say that hon. Members who continually shouted "Order" were themselves most disorderly. If he was not in order in alluding to the policy of the Department, then there would be no failure of duty on his part if he merely protested against the injustice meted out to Voluntary Schools—[*Cries of* "Order"]—while he was denied the opportunity of raising a discussion. [*Cries of* "Order, order."] Labouring under the difficulty of being pulled up at every sentence—[*Cries of* "Order" *and counter cries of* "Progress."] For the purpose of putting himself in order, and as he did not wish to place himself in the slightest degree in antagonism to the Chair, he Moved to Report Progress.

Motion made, and question proposed—"That the Chairman do Report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY said, on this Motion it would seem to him very difficult for Members to discuss the Education Votes if they were not allowed to consider any question concerning the policy of the Department. For two years there had not been a proper discussion of the Education Estimates. Last year these Estimates were put off to the month of August. Several points of great interest arose, and it did not seem unreasonable that this, the only opportunity that had arisen for a long time, should be used to discuss the policy of the Department in connection with education. [*Cries of* "Order."] Of course, he would not attempt to discuss that policy now; but inasmuch as the Estimates were brought on last Session at a time when there was not the opportunity for considering them, it might be fairly asked that some attention should be given to matters that had throughout the country caused considerable excitement. (*Cries of* "Order.")

MR. W. P. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley): On a point of Order, Sir, may I ask what is the Question before the Committee?

*THE CHAIRMAN: The Question is that I report Progress, and the hon. Member will confine his remarks to that.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY said, he was endeavouring to show that it was important now to report Progress in order that fair opportunity should be given for proper discussion. [*Cries of* "Order," and a hon. Member asked: "Is this not disputing the ruling from the Chair?"]

*THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. Member meant to do that.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY said, certainly not, but inasmuch as the House of Commons in Committee of Supply afforded the means for discussing the grievances of the people, those who were interested in the national education desired this opportunity of raising questions of administration connected with this expenditure of ten millions, affecting vast numbers of the population. With this object in view he strongly supported the motion.

MR. A. H. D. ACLAND assured hon. Members that neither now or at any time was he unwilling to defend the policy of the Education Department and he did not think that the Committee could charge him with having shown any reluctance in this direction. He would not enter upon that now. This Supplementary Vote arose out of the fact that the attendance of children had improved beyond expectation. He only wished to say that he had no desire to shirk a fair, full and free discussion of the Estimates for the year. He reminded hon. Members that in the first year after he entered office there was a whole night's discussion, and, though subsequently the Debate was closured, there were several other opportunities for discussion availed of. If last year a fuller opportunity was not given, it was through no fault of his, and he reminded hon. Members of the subsidiary Debates on the Vote on Account. He only wished to assure the Committee that, on his part, there was not the slightest intention or wish to evade discussion.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said, he had no intention to discuss the ruling for which, no doubt, the Chairman had good reason, that discussion on this Vote must be limited. What was now best for the Committee to do? No doubt, in recent years, they had been very severely treated by the Government upon Educational Questions, and he certainly had the hope that hon. Gentlemen would have given some little indulgence which, then, the Chairman would have been not unwilling to recognise. Of course, there would be another opportunity on the Vote on Account, and if the Government wished them to use that opportunity they would do so; but he should have thought the better plan would be to use the present opportunity, hon. Gentlemen putting some restraint on their impatience and allowing others a little latitude. Under the circumstances, if his right hon. Friend went to a Division, he should not vote with him. If, on the other hand, they did not succeed in reporting Progress, they would, of course, carry on the discussion, but they would be obliged to raise all the points over again.

MR. C. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.) said, hon. Members had an opportunity of raising the question of Voluntary Schools at a recent evening Sitting, which was counted out. On that occasion, the Opposition Benches were singularly deserted, and hon. Members could not complain now, seeing they had failed to take advantage of their opportunity.

*SIR W. HART-DYKE asked whether any hon. Member would be out of Order if he referred to any matter which had not strict reference to an increase in average attendance or to an increase of grant for scholars?

*THE CHAIRMAN in reply, laid it down that the Estimate being a Supplementary Estimate, the discussion must be confined to certain definite points.

MR. R. W. HANBURY asked whether the Chairman's rulings came to this, that because this happened to be a Supplementary Vote, the rule was more strict?

*THE CHAIRMAN thought there was a broad distinction between an ordinary and a Supplementary Estimate. As a rule, unless a Supplementary Estimate was of an extraordinary or excessive character, the general discussion of policy should be confined to the first and main Vote. The present Supplementary Estimate was not of such a character, and accordingly it seemed to him a general discussion of policy would be entirely out of Order.

Viscount Cranborne.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 46; Noes, 98.—[Division List, No. 23.]

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said, he rose to ask a question. He need hardly say that he accepted loyally the ruling given by the Chairman, and the object of his question was to ask to what extent discussion within the ruling might proceed? He understood the ruling to be that in a Supplementary Estimate it was not open to hon. Members to discuss the main question or the main policy of the Education Department, but must confine themselves to the discussion of all the causes which had lead the Department to come to the Committee to ask for an increased Vote. Anything which had given rise to the necessity for asking for that extra money would be germane to the discussion. The grounds stated in the Paper for the necessity of asking for more money were three: The first, that there had been an excess in the average attendance of day scholars; the second, that the scholars who had attended had earned a larger grant than was expected; and the third, that there had been a greater claim for free places than was expected when the original Estimate was prepared. What he wished to ask was, would it be in Order, in discussing these Supplementary Estimates, to discuss all the causes and circumstances which had either given rise to the increase in the number of scholars who had attended schools, or to the capacity of those scholars to earn a larger grant? He ——

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order. If the right hon. Gentleman will proceed with his argument on the subject, I will endeavour to put him right if he exceeds the ruling I have given. But I decline to give any further explanation.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE desired to continue to discuss the Vote within the limits of the Chairman's ruling. It was said on the Paper that the reason for asking for this extra money was the excess of the average attendance over what was expected. That question raised a very important point. Article 73 of the Code defined the number of children for whom one teacher would be considered sufficient by the Department for the purposes of the efficiency of the school. That number of children was described in a very ambiguous phrase to which he desired to call the attention of the Committee. The average attendance had been miscalculated by the Government. That might happen every year, and whenever it was miscalculated it might appear that the teaching staff was below the proper standard. In these circumstances if the average attendance was larger than the Government expected, and thereupon the teaching staff dropped below the standard, it might be necessary for the Government to increase the grant. Therefore, it became very important to know exactly what Article 73 meant. Every teacher on the staff was considered efficient to teach a certain number of children. Last year it was found that the number of children for which every teacher had been so considered efficient had been largely diminished. That was looked upon as a hardship by the Voluntary Schools, and the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council agreed to modify the Article. In accordance with this promise he replaced the Article which had been originally laid upon the Table by a new Article, in which a most peculiar phrase occurred. It was stated that the number of children in one class must not exceed by more than 15 per cent. "the number of children habitually present at any one time." A number of questions were put in this and the other House on the subject. He understood the Vice President to say last year that by this particular phrase he meant something different to average attendance. But he found that in another place Lord Playfair stated that the expression "habitually present at any one time" probably meant average attendance. Thus the responsible Minister of the Crown, speaking for the Government in the House of Lords, did not know what the Article did mean, but said that it probably meant average attendance, which was exactly what the right hon. Gentleman opposite had denied in this House. Were they to understand the Department did not really know what the Article did mean? Would the right hon. Gentleman repeat Lord Playfair's words and say "it probably meant average attendance?" It was important that an undiminished number of children should be allowed each teacher in struggling Voluntary Schools. They had great difficulty at present in making the two ends meet; and if they found that a smaller number of children was allowed per teacher than they expected, they would be placed in a very extremely difficult position. He admitted that the right hon. Gentleman, since he had been Vice President, had done his best to meet the difficulties and questions put to him in that House, and he would now ask him to give them a definite explanation as to what "habitually present at any one time" meant? They understood what average attendance meant, and if habitually present at any one time meant the same as average attendance, they should know where they were, but the expression was perfectly new to the Code. It was absolutely necessary in this matter to be explicit, and he would, therefore, urge that a full explanation should be given by the right hon. Gentleman of the meaning of Article 73.

It being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

The House resumed.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (MR. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) in moving the Second Reading of the above Bill, said it was originally introduced in the House of Lords, but as the Bill had relation to the question of the imposition of Customs Duties that had been found to be a breach of the privileges of the House of Commons, and the Bill was therefore withdrawn from the Upper Chamber. It was a simple Bill, of only one Clause. At the Ottawa Conference last year the different representatives of the Australian Colonies desired that the restriction on their freedom to make Customs arrangements between themselves and other Colonies should be removed; and that they should have the same liberty in that respect as was enjoyed by the Canadian Colonies. The object of the Bill was to remove those restrictions. The Bill did not affect Free Trade or Imperial Customs or Tariffs, and every proposal made under the Bill by any Colony would eventually have to come before the Secretary of State for the Colonies for his assent or veto if it were thought that Imperial interests were imperilled or injured. He therefore hoped the House would allow the Second Reading.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) did not oppose the Second Reading of the Bill, but was sorry his hon. Friend had not introduced it at a time when some discussion could take place on the general question of Colonial trade. He hoped the Government would soon make some definite statement as to the removal of the Treaties which prevented the Australian Colonies from giving the Mother Country preferential terms in trade tariffs.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) asked whether there was any clause in the Bill to prevent the sale in Melbourne of goods made in prison in Adelaide and *vice versa?*

The Bill was then read 2°

Mr. Sydney Buxton.

MORTGAGEES' COSTS BILL.

MR. R. B. HALDANE (Haddington) moved the Second Reading of this Bill. He believed the Bill had been substantially agreed to. As the law stood at present, the costs fell upon the wrong person, and the Bill simply got rid of the technical rule.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked if the Government approved the Bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. T. REID, Dumfries Burgh) said, the only purport of the Bill was to make the mortgagor instead of the plaintiff liable for costs, and under these circumstances the Government saw no objection to the Bill.

Bill read 2°.

BOARDS OF CONCILIATION BILL.

*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, the Bill was supported by the London Chamber of Commerce, and he hoped it would be read a second time.

Order for Second Reading postponed till next day.

SHOP HOURS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. George Russell, Bill "To Amend the Shop Hours Act, 1892."

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday next, and to be printed. [Bill 162.]

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

MR. R. W. HANBURY asked what would be the Order of Business tomorrow?

MR. T. E. ELLIS said the Supplementary Estimates would be the first order.

House adjourned at Fifteen minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 8th March 1895.

Private business only was transacted.

The House adjourned at thirty minutes after Four o'clock, until Monday March 11th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 8th March 1895.

The House met shortly after Two of the clock.

THE JARVIS CHARITY.

*THE VICE CHAMBERLAIN (Mr. C. R. SPENCER, Mid Northants) brought up Her Majesty's Gracious Reply to the Address, which was as follows:—

> "I have received your Address praying that I will withhold my consent from the scheme of the Charity Commissioners relating to the Charity of George Jarvis to the inhabitants of the parishes of Staunton-on-Wye, Letton, and Bradwardine, in the county of Hereford. I will comply with your advice."

QUESTIONS.

NAVY CONTRACTS.

COLONEL C. E. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the tubes supplied for the boilers of Her Majesty's ships *Powerful* and *Terrible*, now in course of building were being obtained in Germany; and, in such case, how the Fair Wages resolution of the late Administration was to be enforced, having regard to the absence in Germany of either Trade Union custom or the factory laws in force in this country; and why no Sheffield or other firm had had an opportunity of supplying them.

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): These tubes are not being made in Germany, but by a Glasgow firm in Glasgow. They are not ordered direct by the Admiralty, but by the contractors for the ships. Provided they are obtained from a competent maker on the Admiralty List, and subject to the fair wages clause of the contract, the placing of such sub-contracts is left to the discretion of the principal contractors.

There were 23 other questions on the Order Paper, and Mr. Speaker went through the list as usual, but only one Member—Mr. Radcliffe Cooke—rose to put the question which stood in his name, and in that instance the Minister to whom it was addressed was not present.

*MR. SPEAKER then called on Mr. Courtney, who had a notice on the Paper to introduce a Bill to amend the law relating to the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors, but the right hon. Gentleman was not present.

Mr. T. M. HEALY, Mr. RADCLIFFE COOKE, and one or two other Members rose ostensibly to put questions, when—

MR. SPEAKER said: Order, order! Hon. Members are too late. I have gone through the list, and either hon. Members were not present to put questions or Ministers to answer them. I have called on the Clerk to read the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

PUBLIC EDUCATION.

The House then went into Committee of Supply, and resumed discussion of the Vote £133,189 for public education in England and Wales.

MR. JOHN ELLIS in the chair.

(In the Committee.)

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, S.) asked how far the increase in the Vote was due to increased attendance in

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

the elementary schools. Another point to which he wished to refer was the practice of warning schools, which, he said, was a matter of considerable importance to the smaller schools.

*THE CHAIRMAN calling the hon. Member to order, said: I am unable to see how the hon. Member connects his remarks as to the policy of "warning schools" with the specific item before the Committee.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) said he thought the Committee should have a distinct and definite ruling on the point. Were hon. Members to understand that although this grant applied to every child attending the elementary schools, they were prohibited from discussing any point except the increase in the vote?

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) asked, whether the Chairman of Committees, on the preceding night, did not say that he would not state for the guidance of Members what might or what might not be discussed, but would call them to order when they were out of order?

*THE CHAIRMAN: The ruling which I have just given is based on a ruling of the late Chairman of Committees in the last Parliament applicable to Supplementary Estimates. It was referred to by the Committee on Estimates Procedure of 1888 in their Report, and has now become firmly established as the law of Parliament. I have nothing further to add.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W. R., Rotherham), replying to Mr. Bartley, admitted that the contention that the Free Education Bill would not lead to such a rapid increase of average attendance as was expected, had been borne out by results, for although a very much larger number of children had crowded into the schools, the advance in the percentage of average attendance, though steady, had been slow. The actual number of children provided for in this Estimate for this year was 50,000 beyond what had been expected. In the year before, the advance was 3 per cent., which was very much larger than had taken place in former years, when 1 per cent. advance was more usual. Last year they allowed for 1¾ per cent., but the advance was much nearer 3 per cent., which accounted for the increase in the present Estimate. The figures as to attendance were—1891, 77·70; 1892, 77·84; 1893, 79·98; and in 1894, 81·28; showing that there had been a slow and gradual increase.

In reply to VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester),—

MR. ACLAND said, that the meaning of the words "habitually present" was that if the inspector should find that during a given number of weeks there was an additional increase beyond what was ordinarily reasonable, taking the year all round, he would call attention to it.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said, the words "habitually present at any one time" appeared to be a contradiction in terms, and were open to the most extraordinary misunderstanding. Matters of this kind ought not to be dependent upon the particular Minister for the time being. The language of these rules, under which money was invested and great efforts were expended, ought to be precise and clear. The expressions "habitually present" or "present at any one time" were conceivable; but "habitually present at any one time" was a contradiction in term. If the right hon. Gentleman had been content with "average attendance" they would have understood his meaning. He did not mean to say it would have satisfied them altogether, but they should have been able to discuss the matter on that basis and might have come to some agreement. The people who had to interpret the Code were not skilled persons. Every country clergyman and country manager throughout England had to interpret it, and the Department were, therefore, bound to express themselves clearly. It was not surprising that the National Society should have found itself totally unable to understand these words when Lord Playfair himself could not understand them. The right hon. Gentleman ought to put in express words exactly what he meant.

MR. ACLAND said, he would consider whether he could not put some other words in the Code.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I am very much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston), as a practical educationist, submitted that the figures of the Estimate were not laid clearly before the House. He had brought the same point before the Committee last year, and though the right hon. Gentleman then gave a general and vague explanation, he was in hopes that this year the figures would have been presented in a more explicit manner. There had been a *prima facie* increase in the average attendance; but that would have been better shown by a statement of the estimated average attendance and the actual average attendance. At present they did not know what the exact increase had been.

Mr. ACLAND: I mentioned just now that it was about 50,000.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE said, it would have been better if it had been shown by comparative figures. They had, however, some data whereby they could form their own conclusions. The fee grant for day scholars had exceeded the Estimate by £63,700. That meant that there had been at least 127,000 new scholars. These new scholars must have earned grants, and as these were given at 18s. a head they might have looked for an increase in the amount of grant earned of £111,000. But the Supplementary Estimate showed an increase of only £72,000. Further, he inferred from the Statement accompanying the Estimate that the rate of grant per scholar had risen, but there was no room for that increase in this £72,000. There must be some discrepancy in these figures, and it arose because the statement was not properly made. It might be convenient for the Department to make the statement in this form, in order that there might be as few points as possible of which the Opposition could lay hold, but there were educationists in the House who were obliged to be versed in these matters, and the right hon. Gentleman could not wonder if they insisted on raising this question. He did not mean to say that the discrepancy in the figures was very important, but it ought to be explained: and he had the less compunction in pressing the matter now because he raised the same point a year ago. He hoped a more explicit explanation would be given now than was furnished on that occasion.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY thought they were entitled to have some information from the right hon. Gentleman as to what appeared to be, at first sight, a discrepancy in the figures. He thought they were entitled to ask the Vice President how far a rule of that kind, which pressed very heavily upon the poorer schools, and especially upon the Roman Catholic schools, which were among the best in the country, had the effect of producing the discrepancy to which his hon. Friend had referred. They were also entitled to ask what proportion of schools which would have earned the 21s. had been cut down to 17s. 6d. There was another point to which he wished to refer, and it was with regard to the question of attendances in small schools during such severe weather as we had experienced of late. Take the case of schools where many of the children had to go no less than three miles to get to them. At the present moment an absurd regulation practically made them during the severe weather, unless they were going to considerably reduce the grant, absolutely to shut the schools up for a certain time and prevent all children attending, because, as the right hon. Gentleman knew, the average attendance was calculated upon the number attending if the school was open a certain number of times. During any long spell of bad weather, therefore, the children at a distance were unable to attend, and consequently the grant was cut down. If, however, they wanted to get the full grant they had to close the school even to those children who were able to attend. Surely some better regulations than that could be made, because it inflicted considerable injustice upon the children living in the neighbourhood of the school, and who were deprived of their education. The right hon. Gentleman had shown a disposition during his term of office to make the rules elastic and to do away with some of the cast-iron regulations, and he would do something also to remedy this particularly absurd state of things.

Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND was grateful for the last few words the hon. Member had used, because he had not often received expressions of such a nature from that side of the House. With regard to the last question that had been raised, he thought that the removal of the regulation, instead of encouraging children to go to school on bad days, would have the inevitable result of making bad-day attendances not count at all. They were constantly taking into account the various difficulties which presented themselves to keep up the school attendance, and he had sent out a special circular asking the Inspectors to bear in mind the difficulties which schools had to face during the recent severe weather. They were therefore assessed on the basis of that consideration, and he was inclined to think that it was doing well, because out of the hundreds of schools inspected up to the present he had not received a single complaint. He did not know how far the question of the 17s. 6d. limit entered into the Debate, and did not think the hon. Member would want him to go into the policy of that limit. He was sorry, however, that the figures had not been made more clear, andwould undertake on the occasion of the next Supplementary Estimate to explain them a little more carefully. The £72,000 was made up of two parts, one part being due to the increased attendance of the children, and the other part was due to the fact that the Inspectors had given larger grants than were estimated. The first was, roughly speaking, £45,000, and the second, £26,000, was due to the actual increase of the grant. They had estimated the increased grant at 18s. 6½d., but it turned out to be 18s. 8d., so that the Estimate was not a sufficiently large one. The payment of the fee grants was an extremely complicated system, as they paid a certain amount per quarter, and then in the fourth quarter made up a certain larger sum. Sometimes there were excess payments, and reductions had to be made because the fee grants to certain schools had been overestimated, but gradually they were settling them, and he hoped the reductions would eventually disappear. It was an extremely complicated subject, but there was no desire on the part of the able men who had to do the Estimate work of the Department to complicate it more than they could avoid. The Committee, he thought, would understand that the attendance of children was a matter difficult to forecast, and as a matter of fact the Department required more money than was at first expected.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE asked the right hon. Gentleman to explain, before the Vote was taken, to what cause he attributed the increased attendance. He presumed it was in consequence of the free education system, but wished to have the assurance of the Vice President on the point.

Mr. ACLAND had no doubt that the Free Education Act had largely drawn children to the schools. At the same time, education was becoming more generally appreciated in this country, and parents were beginning to recognise the importance of the regular attendance of their children at school. Both the causes had been operating at the same time.

Viscount CRANBORNE thought it would interest the Committee if the right hon. Gentleman would state to what he attributed the increased grant which was so much above the Estimate. Was it in consequence of superior excellence on the part of the children, or through the alteration which was made in the Code last year?

Sir R. TEMPLE asked to what cause the right hon. Gentleman attributed the increase in the average attendance?

Mr. ACLAND said, he was sure the Committee would not expect him to give more than a rough idea. He thought that heads of families had done their best before to promote regular attendance. They were beginning to realise the great importance of the matter. As the noble Lord well knew, he could not there and then analyse the causes. He thought the improvement all round was partly due to this, and partly to the fact that some extra subjects were being more taken up and better taught.

In reply to Mr. W. WICKHAM (Hants, Petersfield),

Mr. ACLAND was understood to say that the new regulations were issued about three weeks ago.

Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) was not quite sure whether he would be in order, but there was one matter which he would like to bring before the Department. He referred to a school at Preston where there was a cookery class. This was not carried on at the schools but near to them; but the Inspector found that the register was defective, and so the schools suffered. If a little more time had been allowed, the register could have been corrected. It seemed to him only a technical matter and that the schools should not be excluded.

MR. ACLAND: If the hon. Member will give me details I will look into it.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) asked, as to these cookery classes——

*THE CHAIRMAN ruled that discussion would be out of order.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER said, the point he wished to refer to was that extra subjects had recently been added with respect to which these grants were given. ["No!"] Was it not so, that certain additional subjects had been added and grants given?

MR. ACLAND: Cookery?

MR. JAMES LOWTHER said the matters in his mind were gardening and tree-cutting.

MR. ACLAND: They have not received grants in the past year.

MR. H. S. FOWLER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) hoped they would have an early opportunity of discussing the whole question. The right hon. Gentleman knew that during the last two years the Vote on Account, so far as education went, had always been closured. He therefore thought they had a right to have an opportunity of discussing the whole policy of the Education Department.

Vote agreed to.

On the Vote of £10 for London University,

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, he was sorry to have to move a reduction in this Vote, as his desire was to stimulate the University and give it more adequate means of conducting its eduction. Therefore, nominally, his Motion would be at variance with the desire he had, but he moved the reduction with the object of drawing the attention of the House. With reference to the University, he might point out its strong claims for liberal treatment. It had only £20,000 a year, and students by their payments of their fees provided the whole of the advantage of the education given by the University, which might be spoken of as a self-supporting institution. The State gave this £20,000, and, on the other hand, it had a right to see that the work was done well, that there should be proper and efficient tests both of the qualifications of the students for their degrees and the manner in which the teaching was done by the public schools of the country which sent them up for examination. Notwithstanding the representations made to the Governments of both Parties that the examination rooms are wholly insufficient—that the scientific appliances, which were of great importance in conducting examinations, were almost entirely wanting; that the necessary physical apparatus was not provided, and, even in reference to accommodation absolutely necessary, nothing had been done. A correspondence had been going on with the Treasury for a long time past, and he should call attention to one or two letters on the subject. In November 1893 the Senate represented to the Treasury that these works were absolutely necessary, and in that month a reply was received from the Department, in which it was said that the Department regretted the delay in providing new examination rooms, and that the only pretext which was advanced for not doing that which the Ministry required, was that the present condition of the Revenue forbade it. The Revenue, however, must be provided. Of all Votes taken in Parliament, the most economical was, undoubtedly, the Educational Vote. The letter of the Treasury said that they were wishful to provide accommodation, and in the interest of giving proper examination rooms they would concede a small sum for the provision of the electric light. He thought it was absurd to meet a demand for educational appliances by saying that lighting for the building would be provided, a concession which was absolutely irreconcilable with the want which had been expressed. The Treasury also admitted on November 7th, 1894, that new laboratories were wanted for this purpose, and yet they declined, on the score of want of Revenue, to provide them. He had before him resolutions of the Senate, in which they said that the request of the Registrar to call the attention of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury to the difficult and unfair position in which the Senate was placed, by the insufficient accommodation at their disposal for carrying out the public duties with which they were entrusted, and urging the provision of additional accommodation, should no longer be deferred. Again, in December last, a renewed representation having been made, My Lords again regretted that the demands of the Exchequer prevented this paltry accommodation for the institution. which cost the State nothing from being granted. The Registrar was directed to acknowledge the receipt of the letter, and to express regret at the non-provision, while again impressing on the Government the urgent and admitted need of such laboratories for the conduct of the business of the University. That representation came from the Senate, which included among its members the Lord Chancellor, as well as other men closely identified with the educational work of the country. He pointed out that this question had been raised nearly a year ago, and that on the Estimates the Secretary to the Treasury gave something amounting to almost an assurance to the hon. Baronet, the Member for St. Pancras (Sir J. Goldsmid), and himself, that this subject should receive attention. He did not doubt that any promise on the right hon. Gentleman's part to give attention to the question, would be amply fulfilled; but what was wanted was money, not attention.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I want money also.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT said, the University of London provided the right hon. Gentleman with the means within £10 or £20 of the whole of its cost. On the other hand, if the University did its work the State was under a binding obligation to the University to allow that work to be performed, and the students who paid their fees had a right to protest against the way in which their examinations were being conducted. He intended on this occasion, as a means of extracting money, or at least as a means to indicate the determination to extract it if possible, to divide the Committee. He concluded by moving the reduction of the Vote by £5.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, that the object of the hon. Member was to extract money out of the Exchequer for a purpose which he admitted to be an admirable one. There was an old saying, however, that "you cannot get more out of a cat than the skin." The skin of the cat had been presented to the Committee already in the shape of the Estimates which were before hon. Members. While admitting the utility of this institution, and the reasonableness of its demand, he maintained that as long as the expenditure of the country grew every year by millions—last year by between £3,000,000 and £4,000,000 and this year by £2,000,000—he was afraid that he must say no to many of the objects which were pressed upon his attention, and with respect to which one would willingly say yes. They were obliged, therefore, when the expenditure increased to make economies in other directions. and though he should be glad if he could to find money for purposes which were very useful, he was compelled to recognise that when the country was spending something like £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 additional on ironclads, their demands must be limited in respect of bricks and mortar. He must cut his coat according to his cloth; but his cloth was all gone, and he had no material to make coats out of for the London University or for anyone else. In these circumstances it was not because he did not sympathise with this object, or that he would refrain at the earliest time to give money to it, but simply because he had not the means, unless indeed his hon Friend would rise and propose additional taxation, say another 6d. on the Income Tax, or any other indulgence of that character. Then he would be glad to satisfy the claims of his hon. Friend or those of other hon. Members. But having regard to the state of the Estimates, and the provision which it was necessary to make to meet them, he was sorry to say that he could only repeat on behalf of My Lords that their present position was that of "splendid paupers." He was afraid, therefore, that he must again plead the unfortunate difficulty of not being able to find this money.

*SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) said, he had been for 20 years a member of the Senate of the University of London, and had enjoyed many opportunities of seeing the valuable work which was done by that institution. He thought that the case was even a little stronger than that placed before the Committee by his hon. Friend. Several years ago the First Commissioner of Works prepared a plan for putting up new laboratories which should supply the requirements of the University at the top of the existing building. That plan was submitted to the Senate of the University of London and approved by them. Subsequently, when the Office of Works was about to carry out the undertaking on which it had entered, a difficulty arose in consequence of the probability of injuring the light of the Royal Academy of Arts, and the result was that the First Commissioner was unable to carry out the work, and the University did not obtain the necessary additions to the building. The First Commissioner of Works admitted later, however, that these facts did not exonerate him from the duty which devolved upon him, nor from the undertaking which he had given to the authorities of the University of London; but nothing had been done. The Senate had for the last four years made steady and persistent representations to the Treasury on this important subject. That was a matter of fact which could not be denied; therefore, the present Government as well as the last Government were equally bound by their obligations to the University. He might tell the Committee what it probably did not know—that the annual fees which came from the examination of students who presented themselves were increasing largely, and the statement of his hon. Friend was inaccurate in that he exaggerated the amount which the State paid to the cost of the University of London. At present the fees which were received from the examination of students were in excess of the amount which was paid for the examinations themselves. The result was that the Treasury were actually making a profit out of the examinations. It was true, they said, that there was a counterbalancing expenditure, inasmuch as they maintained the building and supplied the stationery for the Public Departments. Therefore, the Committee had to set off those two items against the balance of receipts on account of the examinations which were held. When the Government gave £5,000 a year and other large sums to small University colleges in different parts of the Kingdom, it was a little hard that the University of London should be refused an expenditure which was absolutely necessary for its work, simply because the Budget requirements did not allow it.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY rose to Order, and asked whether this was a matter of principle or of policy, or whether the discussion was to be confined to the amount required in this special item.

THE CHAIRMAN: Some of the remarks of the hon. Baronet are a little wide of the particular item in the Vote.

*SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID thought that the item was for the whole Vote of the University of London. If he was not to be allowed to discuss the whole Vote there would be no means of bringing this question before the attention of the House. It must be obvious to every hon. Member that he was strictly within the rule which the Chairman had laid down.

THE CHAIRMAN: The particular item does not refer to new buildings.

*SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID said, that he was not now referring to new buildings, but to expenditure. The expenditure of the University was practically more than covered by the receipts from examination fees; and if any other expenditure were involved the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not require more than £5,000 or £10,000 to meet the requirements of the case.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had declared that he was cutting his coat according to his cloth; but the reverse was proved by the presentation of this supplementary estimate. The right hon. Gentleman was cutting his cloth according to his coat, and, not having enough cloth, he was now asking for more. The Committee was entitled to discuss what was to be the use of the extra cloth, and whether it would improve the original garment. He wished for an explanation of the term "*Pro rata* payments to contingent examiners."

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) said, that the examiners were considerable in number, and were paid at different rates. The Vote was not a supplementary estimate in the real sense. A considerable number of extra students had been examined in the past year. That was an additional expense; but it had provided an additional number of fees, which quite met the additional expenditure. The sum of £10 was put down to bring the matter before the House. As to the argument of the hon. Member for Islington (Sir A. K. Rollit), he quite admitted that the Senate had made out a very strong case for the provision of better examination rooms and rooms for the other purposes alluded to by the hon. Member. But the exigencies referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been too great for the Treasury; and he was afraid that the matter would have to remain over for future consideration. He could assure the hon. Member that as far as he could help forward the object he should be very glad to do so.

MR. W. P. BYLES (Yorkshire, Shipley) said, that if the Amendment were carried to a Division he should support it. The argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was that in order to provide plenty of money for the Navy, other useful and much-needed expenditure must be cut down. The London University was, in other words, to be starved that new battleships might be provided; and he preferred that the money should be spent on the University than on bloated armaments.

*SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID hoped that his hon. Friend would not divide, as no object was to be gained; and as personally he was in favour of greater and not less expenditure. Moreover. this £10 did not really cover any national expenditure. He hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give some assurance that next year the case would be more favourably considered.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, that, as far as he was concerned, as soon as he found himself able to do it there was not an object which he would be more willing to promote.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT said, that after the statement of the right hon. Gentleman he should not be justified in dividing the House. He hoped the first opportunity would be taken of enabling the Senate to do its duty.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Vote agreed to.

Sir J. T. Hibbert.

On the Supplementary Vote of the sum of £500 for services in connection with the suppression of the Slave Trade and the maintenance of certain liberated Africans,

MR. J. A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside) said, that he should move a reduction in this Vote on the ground that the expenditure failed to accomplish its object. There was a system of domestic slavery existing on the mainland between the large inland lakes, and with that at the present time Great Britain was not in a position to interfere. But on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba the situation was different. In 1861, through the arbitration of Lord Canning, the influence of Great Britain became predominant on those islands; and in 1890 Great Britain obtained absolute control over the islands. But at the present time the Government were absolutely ignorant as to the extent and the condition of the slavery for the suppression of which this Vote was required. On the island of Pemba this country had not at present even a representative. In 1844 the estimated slave population of those islands was 360,000, and since then no record or census had been made. The Consular Report issued last year showed how ineffective the expenditure had been. In 1892 the export of cloves was 1,895,000 rupees, and in 1893 it was 2,218,000 rupees, so that the production of slave labour had considerably increased. He had it on the authority of Sir John Kirke—our representative in that district for 28 years—that the number of slaves on those islands was three times what it had been 10 years ago. It was absurd to ask that House for this money for services which absolutely failed to prevent the smuggling of slaves to Pemba and Zanzibar from the mainland. The decimation of the slave population was partly due to climatic reasons and partly due to the cruelty of the Arabs, described by Dr. Livingstone and by the officers of Her Majesty's ships to which fugitive slaves had fled. There was a decree of June 5th, 1873, which prohibited the importation of any slave, and this expenditure on the Estimates was aimed at securing its observance. But inasmuch as there were very few births on the islands among the slaves, it must follow that nearly the whole of them were illegally detained. The greater number of the slaves in Zanzibar and Pemba came from our own Protectorate in Nyassaland. Only 10 per cent. of those taken, however, reached the coast, the other 90 per cent. perishing by the way. This anomaly existed—that our own subjects in the Nyassa Protectorate were raided and sold to our own subjects in Zanzibar. In their interpretation of our actions the Arabs doubted our sincerity, and the infamous traffic continued to supply the demand, against which this vote was wholly ineffective. We must destroy the demand; it was our duty to do so. Let the slaves on the island be emancipated, and there would be no need to come to the House for a vote like this. If we emancipated the slaves, it would do away with the female labour employed in coaling vessels. It might be said that wages were paid for this labour, but so long as the Mohammedan law prevailed in the district and Arabs possessed slaves which had value with their other goods, every penny piece these slaves got would be forced from them, and it was admitted that they were compelled to hand all the money over to the Arabs in whose possession they were. On the mainland there was a demand by travellers, by sportsmen, and by Her Majesty's Goverment in connection with transport service. There was a decree of September 1891 forbidding the enlistment of any slave outside the Sultan's dominions, and the Government derived a revenue from the enlistment of these slaves, of whom only one out of three going inland ever returned to the coast. Two out of every three died, a fact which would be found stated in Mr. Stanley's account of the expedition for the relief of Emin Pasha. Sir Gerald Portal's opinion was that the demand for these men could only be destroyed by the construction of a railway, and on this point he mentioned in passing that at midsummer next a vessel would be sent from the Clyde to the Victoria Nyanza, and the cost of transport would be about £29,000, equivalent to half the interest required to guarantee the making of a railway.

THE CHAIRMAN (Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID) reminded the hon. Member that he must confine himself to matters relevant to the vote.

MR. J. A. PEASE said, he was not only endeavouring to point out that the only effectual method of suppression was to destroy the demand, and the construction of a railway would have a direct influence in destroying the demand for slaves. Passing from that, he pointed out that on August 22nd, 1890, a secret decree was issued which refused to a slave the right to purchase his own freedom, and also directed the Arab master to punish a fugitive slave. With a secret decree like that in existence, how could we expect that by spending money such as the Committee were now asked to vote, any good result could be effected? He submitted that such a decree should be at once repealed. We could not destroy altogether the demand for slaves, for slavery existed in Persia, in Arabia, and in Morocco: we could not kill the trade altogether, but we could do a great deal by uniform and concerted action with other Powers. We could prevent a continuance of those revolting practices in an island of the Red Sea for the supply of eunuchs. These things were done daily, but a vigorous protest to the Turkish Government should put an end to them. Our policy had been a ridiculous and expensive failure. We might save £100,000 in naval expenditure for intercepting slaves. We were too lethargic, we depended too much on the gradual growth of civilising influences. We allowed a state of things to continue which retarded progress and development, which naturally arose where native races came into contact with Europeans; we delayed that commercial development which would be of advantage to our industrial population at home. He asked that the Government should emancipate the slaves, abolish the legal status of slavery on the mainland, repeal the decree of 1890—and he urged them to construct the railway to get rid of those evils on the mainland to which he had alluded. The Government, to its credit, be it said, had recently taken action to put an end to Armenian atrocities, but outrages equally abominable were perpetrated upon these slaves, and certainly the amount of suffering outweighed the atrocities perpetrated in Armenia. He hoped the Government would show themselves sensible of the evil deeds committed under the British flag for the last five years. Mr. Lecky, the historian, classed our unwearied crusade against slavery in the past among the three or four virtuous State actions on record, but to justify that good opinion we must entirely alter our present policy, and then such Votes as this would not be required. He trusted that an assurance would be forthcoming that the stain and reproach on our national honour would be removed. He moved the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Question proposed, that a reduced sum of £400 be granted.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick) said, this was not a Foreign Office Vote, and certainly he was not prepared to enter at any great length into the policy of the Foreign Office in regard to the difficulties of the law, for he had not anticipated having to make a statement that evening. He would, however, do his best to meet the points raised by his hon. Friend. First, he would say of the Committee that it should be borne in mind in estimating this question of slavery in Zanzibar, that only since 1890 had there been a British Protectorate, and he did not think there was much to be gained by going back to events which occurred previously. The usual practice—he would not say it was without exceptions—but the general practice hitherto had been that when a British Protectorate was assumed over a native state, that native state was allowed freedom so far as its domestic institutions were concerned. Against the slave trade the British Government had made, and would continue to make, constant warfare; but the institution of domestic slavery was common to all Mohammedan countries, and certainly it had not been our general practice, upon assuming a Protectorate, to force a complete change in the institutions which had heretofore obtained in a native state. In addition to this, it must be borne in mind that a law passed by the late Sultan of Zanzibar, and to which he had on a former occasion made reference, restricted and regulated the institution of slavery, and the details of that law would have the result of bringing slavery in the island to an end within a comparatively limited time. Since he had been at the Foreign Office this question of slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba had occupied the attention of officers on the spot. There had been reports from British representatives in Zanzibar dealing with this question of slavery, and, upon the whole, the reports possessed by the Foreign Office tended rather to show that the difficulties in the way of putting an end to the institution of slavery in the island were considerably greater than his hon. Friend estimated them to be; that the hardships connected with slavery in the island were considerably less, and that clandestine importation of slaves was not so great as it had been represented to be in some published statements. On the whole that was the tendency of reports received up to the present time. Now the time had come when, having got this information, having taken all things into consideration, the Government had to consider whether they could be regarded as a complete answer to the very strong statement of his hon. Friend. He was convinced that, though the difficulty of putting an end to slavery might be underestimated by his hon. Friend, though certain consequences might occur from taking any strong steps, consequences which, perhaps, were not contemplated by members who advocated that cause, still there was at the same time one very serious consideration to be borne in mind, that so long as the institution of slavery existed on these two islands, so long was there a temptation to evade the Sultan's regulations, so long was there a temptation to evade British cruisers and to smuggle slaves into the islands. It had also to be borne in mind, that not only was there in these islands a British Protectorate, but in a very intimate sense, British influence and interests were concerned in the administration of affairs. He freely admitted we had now arrived at such a position in regard to these islands, that he thought the House would be perfectly justified in insisting that the period of time during which slavery would continue to exist must be limited. But, still, a little further information was required. Up to the present time the Foreign Office had no information as to the condition of Pemba. The present Government had taken steps to obtain this information; they had sent a vice-consul to Pemba specially instructed to collect information as to the condition of the people in regard to slavery, and to furnish information which might tend to throw more light on the question, and help the Government to come to a decision as to what might be done. His hon. Friend had recommended three courses. He alluded to a certain decree issued, and then withdrawn, the effect of which would be to fix the money price at which a slave should be entitled to purchase his own freedom. His hon. Friend recommended that this decree should be re-established, that the status of slavery should be abolished, by which he meant, he concluded, not the declared emancipation of every slave——

MR. J. A. PEASE, interrupting, explained that he did not advocate the re-enactment of the previous decree, because, personally, he did not think it was right that anybody should obtain an acknowledgment of right of property in a slave. What he did advocate was that the second decree of August 20, 1890, should be repealed.

SIR EDWARD GREY thought that was pretty much what he had said. The second point was that the *status* of slaves should be abolished, by which he understood his hon. Friend to mean not that there should be special emancipation of all the slaves in the islands, but that slaves should be entitled to appeal to the Courts for redress.

MR. J. A. PEASE said, that on the islands he advocated emancipation pure and simple; but on the mainland, where domestic slavery and not plantation slavery existed, he advocated the abolition of the legal *status*.

SIR EDWARD GREY said, he could not, of course, hold out any hope to the Committee that they could, by one enactment, emancipate at one stroke all the slaves on the islands; but the question of the abolition of the *status*, as sketched out by his hon. Friend with reference to the mainland, was another matter, and, though he could not say that the Government would pledge themselves to that course, it was one worthy of consideration. The third point was that the law previously passed by the Sultan should be strictly enforced, and he had no hesitation in saying that the Sultan's Government would do their utmost to secure that. But although, with regard to the withdrawal of a certain decree which had previously been issued and the abolition of slavery on the islands, he could not pledge Her Majesty's Government, yet during the course of the last two months they had sent instructions to our representative in Zanzibar to furnish a report as to the steps which should be taken with a view of bringing the *status* of slavery to an end in the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba at an early date. Therefore he was able to say that the object that his hon. Friend had advocated was one not only the importance but the necessity of which Her Majesty's Government admitted, as they had already asked for a report with the view of considering what were the best steps that could be taken. Until that report was given it was impossible for him to say more; but he ought to tell the Committee that, according to the intimation which he had received on this subject, it was shown very clearly that, at first at any rate, the termination of the *status* of slavery would result in a tremendous falling off in the revenues of Zanzibar. His own opinion, from information he had received, was that that would be the temporary result. The place of the slave labour would not be taken immediately by free labour, and undoubtedly there would be very great hardship on the two islands and a great falling off in the revenue. That would for some years, in his opinion, be the case. He would like it to be distinctly understood that he admitted that there ought to be an abolition of the *status;* but, although the present Government was now considering what means could be taken to attain that object, if the House was to approve of the abolition by Her Majesty's Government it ought also to be prepared, if the necessity arose after steps had been taken, to fall back on the Vote of the House, he did not say for the compensation of slavery, but to come to the assistance of the revenues of Zanzibar.

CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) said, that slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba was in a very curious position; although the British flag did not fly there, yet they were actual dependencies of this country. That being so, the question was—Was the honour of this country tainted by the existence of slavery? It was not a question of a few thousand pounds, but a question of what had been the policy of this country in the past, and whether the institution of slavery ought to exist there. He thought the Government ought to look at this question more liberally than they had done in the past. The edicts of the Sultan had not, he believed, been strictly observed, and the Government had the power of seeing that those edicts were enforced. Considering the peculiar position of these Islands, he thought the Government ought to take speedy steps for the emancipation of slaves.

SIR R. TEMPLE rose to support the hon. Member who moved the reduction of the Vote, and he hoped that it would be seen, by a Division, whether or not the House of Commons was prepared to insist upon the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar. We had allowed these two islands to be virtually the slave market for the mainland. Africans were actually hunted and raided within regions under the sphere of British influence. He did not think Wilberforce and his collaborators would have believed that such a scandal would have been permitted in the second generation after their labours. Such circumstances, as had been calmly detailed that evening by the hon. Baronet, were enough to make the bones of Wilberforce turn in his grave. This was the third occasion on which the matter had been brought before the House, and on each occasion they had had the usual stereotyped reply. He admitted that on this occasion the reply went a little farther than it did before, but they had heard any time during these last two or three years that inquiry was being made. The hon. Baronet calmly told the House that if this was abolished there would be a falling off in the revenues of the Sultan of Zanzibar. That was what his argument amounted to. [SIR E. GREY: "No."] He would ask the House to remember the sacrifices made in the West Indies, and by England herself, for the freeing of the slaves. The hon. Baronet did say that the revenues would be seriously diminished, and he did not say that the plantations would be ruined, or that there would be very great private distress. The Mover of the Amendment had shown that this slave labour had increased, and that it was flourishing more than ever. He had also shown how the decrees issued by the Sultan of Zanzibar to abolish the slave trade had been treated simply as waste paper. Our officers at Zanzibar had not acted with the firmness which British Administrators had shown elsewhere, simply because the instructions sent to them from home were not sufficiently urgent. Hon. Members of that House were somewhat to blame too in the matter, by not insisting by large majorities that the Government should act promptly and resolutely. Surely the policy of vacillation should now be put an end to, and the Foreign Office made to understand that the House of Commons had made up its mind once for all that this evil should be abolished.

SIR EDWARD GREY thought the hon. Baronet had not quite understood what he had said the Government had done in the matter. What he intended to convey was, that some little time ago—before the Session began—the Foreign Office sent out instructions to the British representatives on the spot to report as to what steps it would be best to take to bring this system of slavery to an end. Obviously until that report was received he could not pledge the Government to take any particular steps in the question. But the thing had to be done, and they had asked for a report to be sent home to them as to the best means of carrying it out. He had also said that the result would very likely be, that the revenues of Zanzibar would be affected—that they would fall through the abolition of the system, and he thought so still. But it would be the duty of the Government—whatever Government were in power—to come to that House for the rescue of the revenues of Zanzibar.

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said, the steps taken by the Government had been taken two years too late. The Foreign Office had failed to appreciate the gravity of the situation, and he still held the view he had previously expressed—that so long as this Protectorate remained under the Foreign Office they would have the difficulty with them. He ventured to say that if the Protectorate had been under the Colonial Office, the system of slavery would have been put an end to four years ago. Backed up by the House of Commons the Colonial Office would have acted promptly and decisively in the matter. Some years ago there had been slavery in a new British Protectorate under the Colonial Office in the Malay Peninsula, and the same reasons had been adduced for leaving it alone which were given now, but it had been soon put a stop to; and when the Under Secretary declared that we should have to vote monies towards the revenues of Zanzibar, he had to say that a similar claim might have been made for voting money towards the revenues of Pera, and that nobody even thought of doing anything of the kind. He should offer uncompromising resistance to any such proposal.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) said, he thought the real and true remedy for the evil complained of had been strangely overlooked in the discussion. We had been spending large sums almost uselessly year after year in combatting the evil, when all the time it had been in our power to stop the traffic—to stop the raiding for slavery and the bringing of caravans to the coast, by constructing a railway. The whole question was considered by the eminent men who met at Brussels, and the very first article in the Brussels Act they state that the most effective way if not the only effective way, of stopping this slave traffic was by the construction of railways.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) rose to a point of order. He wished to know whether the hon. Member was in order in raising the question of the expediency of building railways in Africa. Personally, he had no objection, for he was prepared to go into the whole question if it was raised.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER said, he had no wish to raise the whole question of building railways in Africa, but he had mentioned it to show that there was another and more effective remedy for dealing with the evil than those which had been advocated.

*Sir C. W. DILKE, on the point of order, said, the Mover of the Amendment, when he began to refer to the subject of railways in Africa, was called to order by the Chairman. If the point could be referred to now it would not be quite fair that those who raised this question of the slave trade should be laid open to the reproach of not bringing forward this particular point, seeing that the Mover of the Amendment was prevented from doing so.

The CHAIRMAN said, the hon. Member for Penrith would not be in order to discuss the whole question of railways. He understood the hon Member to refer to the question only incidentally.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER said, he would not pursue the point further, but it did seem extraordinary to him that the House should go on year after year voting large sums to grapple with the evil, and neglect to take the one effective means of destroying it at its very source. As to abolishing slavery in Zanzibar at once, he had some doubt. He thought the first step we should take in the matter was to refuse entirely to acknowledge the status of slavery; and if that was done, the slave owners would gradually come to understand that, in those circumstances that status could no longer exist. In that way they might arrive at a solution of the question without resorting to violent measures.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) asked, why, if the Government recognised the importance of the question, they did not send to our representatives at Zanzibar two years ago for a report as to the best means of dealing with the traffic. There had been ample time for them to have got a report and to have acted upon it. He was astonished to hear the Under Secretary state as a point for consideration in this matter, that if the slave trade was abolished the revenues of Zanzibar would suffer. Let them suffer; the point was a very small one, carrying little weight it. He believed that if British officers at Zanzibar had had definite and urgent instructions to put an end to the slave trade, they would not have failed to act on them. Members of both Parties now believed that almost culpable neglect had been exhibited in this matter. It was not a question of Party; it was a question of suffering humanity. And no reference to the revenues of the Sultan of Zanzibar ought to have been introduced in a matter that concerned the honour of England and of her flag.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) thought there could be no doubt as to the very grave importance of the subject, which undoubtedly touched the honour and reputation of this country. The hon. Member for Tyneside in his very interesting speech really dealt with two subjects, which it would be desirable to keep entirely separate. The first point which the hon. Gentleman raised was really the question of the policy of the Government with regard to the slave trade. That constituted an opposition to the whole of this Vote. Those who thought with the hon. Member for Tyneside—and he undoubtedly shared the hon. Member's opinion on this point—believed that the whole of our recent policy with regard to the slave trade had been a mistake. We were dealing with the matter where we could deal with it to the least advantage and not to the greatest advantage. He was not disinclined to accept the assurance of the Under Secretary that when these slaves found themselves in Zanzibar they were subject to what was called domestic slavery, and that their condition was not one of very great hardship. That might possibly be true. The suffering occurred upon the route. It was not the existence of the slaves when they got to Zanzibar, it was the provision of the slaves, and all the circumstances which attended upon that provision, that was the difficulty. That being the case it was of supreme importance to deal with the matter at the fountain head—to prevent the slave raids and the slave traffic. That was of infinitely more importance than to deal with the slaves when they were once on the island. That was one point raised by the hon. Member, and the hon. Member and those who thought with him would be only consistent if on that point they took a Division against the whole Vote. He did not deny that, to a certain extent, a question of that kind, inasmuch as it undoubtedly involved an attack upon the policy of the Government, must be considered a Party question. Of course, there might be independent Members of either Party who would not vote with their Party on that matter. But this was a great question of Government policy and ought to be kept entirely distinct from the other question raised by the hon. Gentleman, which was in no sense a Party question. The other point was—Was it consistent with all that we had done and said in the past that what was practically the British flag should fly over slavery? That was what had been going on for the last four years, and some of them thought it was quite time it came to an end. That question should be decided upon the Amendment of the hon. Member. He sympathised with the position of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. They knew that no Under Secretary in that House could commit his chief to a policy which had not been previously decided upon. But the hon. Baronet had shown considerable sympathy with the object they had in view; and if the Committee, he would not say by an unanimous vote, for that was not possible, but by the vote of a large majority, showed the Government that there was a universal opinion, on all sides of the House, that the present state of things in the islands should come to a very speedy close, they would strengthen the hon. Baronet's hands and the hands of his Department to proceed in the direction which the hon. Baronet had shadowed forth. The hon. Baronet had made a sort of appeal to the House—it was in that sense that he understood the hon. Baronet's allusion to the effect on the revenues of Zanzibar. He said to the House of Commons:—

> "If you now press us to put an end to slavery in Zanzibar, we may have to come to you hereafter and ask you for a Vote of money."

Let the Committee answer that when he came for that money they would grant it. They would make an answer of that kind if they voted for this Amendment. He, therefore, hoped that without the least regard to Party, or to the first question raised by the hon. Member, they would proceed to vote upon the immediate issue whether or not in their opinion slavery ought to go on in these islands; and whether or not they, as the representatives of the British people, were prepared to pay the cost whatever it might be.

Mr. J. A. PEASE asked leave to withdraw his Amendment on two grounds. In the first place, the money had been spent and they ought to vote it. In the second place, he desired that the question should be raised above Party. The statement of the Under Secretary "that the thing has got to be done"—that slavery must be terminated—was a step to the credit of the present Government which the late Government refused to take. After the statement of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham and the way it was received, it would be perfectly obvious to the country that the House of Commons was prepared to meet any deficit that might arise. He therefore thought they might now leave the question in the hands of the Government.

Leave to withdraw the Amendment was refused.

*Sir JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) said, it was rather touching to find that the hon. Member who brought the question forward shrank from the success which appeared to be likely to attend his exertions. He, however, desired to offer some considerations why the Committee should pause before voting with the hon. Member. The House had in the last two years given some Votes with highly philanthropic intentions which it afterwards had reason to regret. The Vote given for the appointment of the Opium Commission was one of which he thought some Members felt they had reason to be ashamed. Hon. Gentlemen had expressed the greatest readiness to make up to the Sultan of Zanzibar any loss that might accrue to him from the sudden abolition of slavery in his dominions. He was not sure that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had subscribed to these little promises, and he rather thought this was one of the cases in which they would be philanthropically liberal at somebody else's expense. He observed that there were hon. Members who shrank from finding the £20,000 or, perhaps, the £500,000, compensation to the Sultan of Zanzibar, which would stand in the way of any change. They were asked to censure the Government for the slowness with which they had proceeded to accomplish the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar, and to induce them to take more active steps. In the time of the late Government a good deal was done in the direction of the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar. A great deal of money had been spent in stopping the seaboard slave trade, but very little could be done in that way. They must stop the trade at its source. With the view of abolishing slavery in the Sultan's dominions, the late Government procured the issue of decrees by which no slave could be inherited and none could be introduced, so that the institution of slavery was now in process of extinction through the operation of these decrees. Was not that what was done when Parliament decided to abolish slavery in the West Indies? It had always been recognised that a sudden change could not be made. The present Government had been watching the operations of the measures taken by the late Government; and they had been making inquiries with the view of taking other measures. He could not conscientiously vote for an amendment intended to censure the Government for not taking more active steps, while the measures initiated by the late Government, and designed at no distant date to terminate the status of slavery in the Sultan of Zanzibar's dominions, were in operation.

Sir W. HARCOURT said it was the unanimous opinion of the House that every measure that was possible should be taken for the purpose of putting down slavery. That was the policy of this Government, as it was of the last Government, and would be of future Governments. But the House must look at the matter from a practical point of view and see what measures were necessary. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had initiated a counter policy, that the exertions of this country should be made not so much upon the coast as in the centre. He did not think that policy would be supported by the hon. Member for Northampton. [Mr. Labouchere: "No, no."] Yet he was going to vote with the Member for West Birmingham.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: My right hon. Friend has misunderstood me. I regard that as an entirely separate and distinct question. What I am voting against now is the continuance of slavery in the island.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, that in dealing with these countries they must deal with them according to their actual condition, and he would ask the House to consider what would be the effect on our relations with Zanzibar of coming to a resolution of the character suggested by the right hon. Gentleman. He could quite conceive a Vote of that House changing the whole condition of things in Zanzibar, and that would have a very serious effect on our relations with Zanzibar. This was, he understood, intended to be a declaration in favour of an immediate change in the condition of things in Zanzibar, and he did not think that that would be a wise policy to pursue. All he could say, on behalf of the Government, was that they accepted the view that it was the duty of the Government to use their exertions at the earliest possible moment to put an end to slavery both in Zanzibar and elsewhere.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE pointed out that England took up this Protectorate over Zanzibar five years ago. For 2½ years the Government of right hon. Gentlemen opposite did nothing, and during the last 2½ years right hon. Gentlemen now sitting on the Treasury Bench had done nothing, except to tell the House that they would do something. The object of this Vote was simply to state that the House desired that some action should be taken at once to put an end to the abominable state of things which existed in what was practically a British Protectorate. In Pemba there was not one single free labourer. Not only was the acreage under cultivation increasing, but there was every year a large importation of slaves into the island. The cruelty, too, was so great that a slave wore himself out in ten years. He did not think it would be desirable to extend our conquests in the centre of Africa. Nothing could be gained by that so long as we kept a place for the purchase of these stolen goods within our own territory. If the market were done away with the trade would be done away with. He thought the House ought to agree to vote with his hon. Friend the Member for Tyneside, or, at all events, for his proposal. His hon. Friend was no doubt most anxious that hon. Gentlemen should vote for him, but he was in a rather peculiar position as the Private Secretary to a Minister, and it was exceedingly difficult for him to press this Motion when it was said that Ministers were opposed to it. He hoped, therefore, that hon. Members would do what his hon. Friend wished to do, and not what he said he would rather they did not do.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT explained that the Vote before the Committee was for money which had been earned by Her Majesty's ship *Philomel*; and, therefore, if the Committee refused the Vote they would not be censuring the Government but punishing the officers and crew of the *Philomel*, a body of men who had done everything they could to serve their country.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY said, it was quite possible to get the money for the crew of the *Philomel* by putting up another Vote. He wished to express his regret that the right hon. Gentleman who spoke from the Front Bench on his side of the House had made a speech of a party character. With regard to the slavery in Pemba, there was not a pin to choose between the two sides of the House, and, therefore, this could not be a party matter. For 2½ years the late Government were responsible for this policy, and if anyone was to blame they were, because they set the example to right hon. Gentlemen opposite. He did not think that the issue could be avoided by such an excuse as that made by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. England was entirely responsible for the administration of affairs in Pemba. He had travelled a good deal in those countries, and he had never met with domestic slavery in the aggravated form in which it existed in Pemba. The lot of the domestic slave was not, after all, usually a very bad one, but the kind of slavery going on in Pemba was of a great deal worse description. England was still more responsible, because under her rule these slaves had largely increased in number, and, therefore, there was a very much larger market for them. When we suppressed slavery on the West Coast of Africa, we carried it out heartily, and at great cost to this country, but our treatment of slavery on the East Coast had been a very much more half-hearted matter; in fact, it had had the effect of greatly increasing the horrors of the trade. All we did was to divert the trade from the old routes, and the result was that the slaves had to be taken by much longer routes, the horrors of the trade being very much increased thereby. He knew that we had had serious difficulties with France, but whether that was so or not, it did seem to him that there was little ground for the outcries we made against the evils of misgovernment in Armenia under Turkish rule, when two great European powers who were responsible for the state of things on the East

Coast of Africa were acting there as France and England were acting.

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy) appealed to the Government to define their position a little more clearly. It was plain that there was a strong feeling on both sides of the House that there certainly had been a remarkable absence of enthusiasm on the part of the Government in the cause of the suppression of the slave trade. If the Foreign Office had been determined to put down slavery in Zanzibar, it would have been done two years ago, or even before. At the same time, it was not quite true to say that the present Government had done nothing in the matter, for they had appointed a Commission of some kind to go out and report as to the best method of putting down the slave trade.

Sir EDWARD GREY: To ask for a Report from people on the spot.

Mr. DALZIEL supposed that this meant that the Government had made up their minds to put down slavery, and were only waiting to ascertain what was the best plan to adopt. That, however, was not made quite plain in the speech of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and he wished to ask whether the Government would give a pledge, before the Division was taken, that they would act promptly after receiving the Report, and whether, in the event of the Report not embodying recommendations that could be accepted, the Government would undertake to do what they could on their own initiative to put down slavery in Zanzibar? Unless the Government meant business, he should feel compelled to oppose the withdrawal of the Amendment.

Sir EDWARD GREY said, that he thought it only fair to explain at the beginning of his speech that there were certain difficulties in the way of the fulfilment of the wishes of hon. Members. He had explained that a Report had been asked for, not as to whether the thing could be done, but as to the best means of doing it. He had also said, he thought, that the thing had got to be done. He had pointed out the difficulties in the way only for the purpose of explaining why steps had not been taken before. When he alluded to the possible effect of a change in the present state of affairs upon the revenues of Zanzibar, he did not do so because he thought that that course was an insuperable objection; but because he thought it fair to give a warning that the effect of the change must be to necessitate a future Vote. If a Vote should be proposed by any Government in the future, for the purpose of putting an end to slavery at Pemba, or Zanzibar, he should be delighted to support it.

Mr. T. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield) thought that the reason for taking over the island of Zanzibar was that we should have the power to stop the slave trade in Africa. We had now had the island for five years, and during those years there ought to have been an inquiry as to the best method of putting an end to slavery. His vote that day would not be given in favour of the Government who were asking for two or three more years for inquiry. The time for inquiry was over, and the time for action had come. Action ought to be taken within two or three months, and this disgrace to the honour of England ought to be wiped away. It was asserted freely that there were to-day British subjects in Zanzibar who owned slaves. It had always been stated by the Law Officers of the Crown that these slaves were held illegally, and they ought to be free men by the laws of this country. Only a small proportion of these slaves were domestic slaves. Most of them were made to work very hard by their task-masters, who were, very probably, using capital supplied from this country. He had seen it stated that these slaves lived only from three to five years.

Mr. J. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham) wished it to be understood that hon. Members on his side of the House were not going to vote from Party considerations. They were glad that an opportunity had been found to bring the subject of slavery in Zanzibar before the House and the country. He trusted that what had been said would stimulate the Government to do that which was right, and so to maintain the honour of this country, which, he regretted to say, had not been maintained in this matter as it ought to have been, by every Government.

Sir J. M. CARMICHAEL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) was glad that they had obtained a pledge from the Government that the slave trade would be abolished in the islands under discussion. The Government had called for a Report from Zanzibar, not as to whether it was desirable to abolish the slave trade, but as to the best means by which its abolition could be accomplished, and the Government had pledged themselves to effect the abolition of the trade in Zanzibar and Pemba after receiving this Report. Being satisfied with the assurance that had been given, he should support the Government; but he reserved his right to vote against them on this question if, within a certain period, their pledges should remain unfulfilled.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 106; Noes 153.—(Division List No. 24.)

Vote agreed to.

CYPRUS.—GRANT IN AID.

On the vote of £29,000 as a grant in aid of the revenues of the Island of Cyprus,

*Sir C. W. DILKE said, that estimate, although it came in course of payment for the present financial year, really represented expenditure for the previous year. In addition £35,000 appeared in the Civil Service Estimates published that morning as the Cyprus deficit for the present year, and no doubt there would be a deficit in the financial year about to begin. We appeared, therefore, to be entering upon an era of heavy Cyprus expenditure. Ever since 1879, when the series of grants in aid of the revenue of Cyprus was first begun, a large number of Members of the House had always been found to debate and divide against them. The whole history of our financial relations with the Cyprus Protectorate was of such a character that it was almost impossible for anyone to vote with an easy conscience in favour of a grant in aid of Cyprus. In 1891, the last occasion on which a debate and division had taken place, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, then Leader of the Opposition, had made several speeches on the subject. He did not wish, as the Prime Minister, Lord Derby, used to say, to "Hansardise" the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because doubtless, his right hon. Friend held the same views now which he held then, but his right hon. Friend forcibly expressed the views always entertained by himself on this question. On that occasion the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out that we robbed Cyprus of a large sum of money, which should be devoted to its administration, to the extent of something like £100,000, and that we so impoverished Cyprus that we were obliged to devote the money from the English taxpayers in order that we might carry on the affairs of the island, and he concluded by saying that "we ought to make arrangements of a different kind which would not be so unjust to the people of Cyprus as the present arrangements." Now, of course the Government had had plenty of other matters to attend to, and they ought not, perhaps, to be blamed because they had not come to Parliament with new proposals. He thought they were entitled to ask on this occasion that some new departure should be taken and some policy should be announced which should not be open to the very grave statements made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the former occasion. With regard to Cyprus generally, it was originally occupied as a military station, but there was now no great military or naval authority who said it was of any military value to this country. One of the best documents ever prepared on a military or naval subject was the naval prize essay which was read before the Royal United Service Institution by Captain Craigie. In that naval prize essay Captain Craigie proved that we should be stronger in the Mediterranean without Cyprus, and that was given as the conclusion of military and naval experts, who all agreed that Cyprus was worse than useless to this country. At the Royal United Service Institution, on the occasion of the discussion on this essay, although there was an equal division of opinion as to the retention of Egypt and holding the Mediterranean as the route, these words of Captain Craigie passed as accepted generally by all military and naval experts. The garrison had been withdrawn and Cyprus given up as a military station, and therefore they must look at the matter as one of civil administration. The Cabinet of which the present Leader of the House and many of his colleagues in the present Government, as well as the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, and the Duke of Devonshire, were members, put on record, in a public despat settled by the Cabinet itself and laid before Parliament,

> "—that the acquisition of Cyprus is, in their view, of no advantage to the country either in a military or political sense."

Various proposals were made at different times for getting rid of the difficulty in which this country found itself, because Cyprus must be looked upon as the whitest of white elephants, which was kept up at great cost and which was of no value to them. A proposal was made in 1881, with which the name of the right hon. Member for St. George's was connected, for handing Cyprus over to Greece, but no doubt great political difficulties arose to such a course. Without raising any such large questions on this vote, there was ground for pressing the financial situation. What was the financial situation as to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer used such strong language in 1891? It was this. The whole of the tribute and land revenue of Cyprus was remitted to the British Treasury, and they kept the money for the service of the Turkish Loan of 1855 (guaranteed by England and France) so far as it was not provided for by the available portion of the Egyptian tribute. The Cyprus tribute was £92,000, and the available portion of the Egyptian tribute was £72,000, the two slightly exceeding £154,000 a year, which was required for the service of this loan. Between £9,000 and £10,000 remained over, which the Treasury kept for a sinking fund. On the other hand, the Treasury came to that House for irregular contributions towards the revenue of Cyprus. When the sum of £92,000 a year was drawn from Cyprus as tribute it left insufficient money in the island for administrative purposes unless the natives were taxed in an extortionate way. That £92,000 represented a great deal more tribute than the Turks themselves ever drew from the island, whilst one of the great hardships to Cyprus had been that whilst England insisted on levying the tribute in gold, the taxes which were paid during the Turkish administration were paid in paper money, and amounted to very much less. The condition of the island was extremely miserable, and the complaints of the people were very great. The cost of our administration was greater than the cost of the Turkish administration, because our people, not being familiar with Turkish or Greek, had to employ a much larger staff, and for these reasons the government was inefficient and the people were oppressed. It was not in his power to make any practical proposal for a new departure to the Committee; but he hoped the Government, who were in possession of far more information on which these proposals could be based, would do so. He could only bring before the Committee what was a painful and miserable situation, and express his intention to vote against the amount now asked for as a whole, which was what he had always done.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am in the position of agreeing with almost all my right hon. Friend has said. I have not altered the opinion I originally formed and expressed over and over again as to the impolicy of the acquisition of Cyprus, and the great error made in the Anglo-Turkish Convention, as it was called. Of all that Anglo-Turkish Convention Cyprus is the only miserable remnant. The idea that we were to reform Turkish administration, to give good administration to Asia Minor, and especially to Armenia—what has become of all that? That is all in wreck and ruin. There is no doubt that at the period of that Convention there was a sort of phantasmagoria of Eastern splendour. I remember the speeches of the period, and how we were told that Cyprus was to be a bright jewel of the English Crown. I remember there were splendid visions—a sort of dream of Alnaschar; and one noble Lord said that the result of the acquisition of Cyprus would be that the steam plough would be seen in Asia Minor. I am afraid that the number of steam ploughs that go to Armenia at the present time is of very limited dimensions. But the whole of that bright vision has disappeared. There were speculations at that time, and when a Government speculates it may expect good fortune and bad fortune. I fully admit that the speculation as to the Suez Canal was a fortunate speculation, but the speculation in Cyprus has been a most unhappy speculation. That speculation has cost the British taxpayer about half a million of money. What has been the benefit that has accrued from it?

At that time I remember that Lord Beaconsfield said that it was to be a *place d'armes* where our most distinguished generals would settle immediately with 25,000 troops. That is the way we began with Cyprus, but presently it was found to be so unhealthy and so entirely useless that Lord Wolseley with 20,000 men had to retire from Cyprus. The next stage was that it was to be a great naval harbour, but it was found to be of no use to our vessels. I remember my friend Lord Brassey declared that Papho would make an admirable coaling station. I remembered, when he said so, that the cohabitation of Venus and Vulcan had not been a fortunate one, and I thought that Papho was not adapted for a coaling station. Papho has not turned out to be a coaling station; no Vulcan is there, and I am afraid that even the remnants of Venus have disappeared. All these bright visions have vanished into thin air, and what remains? There remains an obligation. We took this property subject to an obligation, and there has happened to this country what has happened to many gentlemen who have dilapidated estates subject to mortgage and who find out that they are not profitable acquisitions. After Lord Wolseley and his army left Cyprus, and after it was shown not to be suitable for a naval station, it was stated that, at all events, Cyprus might be used as a sanatorium for the army in Egypt. But the Secretary for War informs me that it does not even answer in this respect, and that it is found much better and cheaper to send the soldiers of the Egyptian army home to England rather then to Cyprus. Therefore the last resource Cyprus has for any purpose has, as far as I know, disappeared, for the last soldiers have been removed from this *place d'armes*. That is the history of what has happened in Cyprus. Cyprus is not on the way to anywhere. If you want to occupy Egypt you do not go to Cyprus, but to Alexandria. If you wanted to operate on the Dardanelles or the Bosphorus you should have an island near the mouth of the Dardanelles, but Cyprus has absolutely turned out, as far as I can see, to be no road to anywhere. We have taken on ourselves the responsibility of the administration of the island, and what that responsibility costs the British taxpayer is £30,000 a year. That is the price we pay for the possession of Cyprus. What we get in return for our money it would be extremely difficult for anyone to say. I believe the idea at the time that we took possession of the island was that it was to be a sort of basis from which ultimately, somewhere in Asia Minor or in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, the great battle of Armageddon would be fought, which would retrieve the condition of the East. But our relations with other Powers is such that we hope that the battle of Armageddon may be, for a time at least, postponed. I have before me what has been the revenue and what is now the revenue of Cyprus. I am sorry to say that the hopes entertained that the English Government would be able, by some way or other, to develop the agriculture and industries of Cyprus have been entirely disappointed. I saw also in one of the reports on the island that crime, so far from having diminished, has increased in Cyprus; and the representations made by the Bishop who was over here was that the condition of Cyprus was worse now than it was under Turkish rule. These statements are, no doubt, exaggerated, but, at the same time, it is impossible to say that progress has been made in that country. Lord Knutsford's expression was that there had been no actual retrogression in the island; but that is not an encouraging description of 15 years of British rule in that country. Of course, this mortgage to which the country is subject diminishes the resources that would naturally be applied to the development of the country. But that is part of the bargain. If you choose to take an estate subject to a mortgage, that prevents the possibility of your developing it, and of doing what you would otherwise naturally do, and as a consequence everybody on the estate suffers. That was the original error that was made in connection with the Anglo-Turkish Convention. It was all done in a hurry, without any inquiry into what the resources of Cyprus were; and, indeed, so difficult was it to arrive at the value of the tribute that it was many years before it was ultimately fixed at £92,000. I do not know on what foundation it was made, but I believe it was made on the basis of what Turkey had previously received. Well, I find that for two years, and two years only—1891–92, 1893–94—there has been no vote in this House for a grant in aid. That was because the receipts were larger then than now. But Cyprus, like all countries in the world, especially being an agricultural country, has suffered from the low prices which depress agriculture everywhere, the consequence of which is that the produce of the revenue this year has been less than in former years. Indeed, I am afraid that the fall in the revenue will be greater next year, and probably that the grant in aid will be larger. I do not say that it will be a permanent condition of decadence and ruin in Cyprus. I hope not. The revenue of the country has been considerably higher than it is now, and it may yet be made to pay its way after some fashion. But we have accepted the responsibility of what has turned out to be what I can only call a very squalid possession under the notion that it was going to be of great value to this country. There we are, however; we have accepted the responsibility, and we must do the best with the situation in which we find ourselves. My right hon. Friend says we should find some way out of it. One way is to lay a heavier burden on the British taxpayers. But is it fair to ask the British taxpayers to do more than they are doing now for the purpose of keeping up this dilapidated property? I do not think it is. If we could say, "Here is a place of great importance to the Empire; here is some great strategical position for which it is necessary you should make great sacrifices," it would be a different matter. To my mind, the British taxpayer has got quite as much as he can bear, or ought to bear, and to make a proposal in this House that an additional burden should be put on the British taxpayer, in order that more money might be paid to Cyprus, would be an unreasonable demand, and one I am not disposed to make. I admit that we have taken the responsibility and the liability, and that we ought to do our best fairly to administer the country and to do justice to the people. But that we should ask the British taxpayer to produce large sums of money for the purpose of employing it in Cyprus, when it is so much needed at home, is a most unreasonable demand.

*Sir C. DILKE said he had made no such suggestion. The only suggestion of the kind that was made was made by his right hon. Friend himself, when he suggested a few years ago an arrangement of a different kind that would be just to the people of Cyprus.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I should be glad if my right hon. Friend would make a suggestion, for I am not prepared to make one. I know my right hon. Friend says he will vote against this Vote. But he will not improve the condition of Cyprus in that way. We are bound in honour to make good the deficit to such Government as we have in Cyprus—I admit that it is not a very brilliant one—and we should be glad to do more in Cyprus; but, unfortunately, the country is seriously hypothecated for the price paid to the Turkish Government and its creditors, that, from its very inception into our hands, it was impoverished, and though we are prepared, year after year, to make greater sacrifices for the purpose of carrying on the concern, I am not able to think that the British Government can do more than they are doing at present, in order to discharge the liabilities with which they find themselves burdened.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER confessed that he had some difficulty in following the Chancellor of the Exchequer through the somewhat unexpected speech to which the House had just listened He listened carefully to that speech, and he fully expected that, at the end, the right hon. Gentleman would come to what seemed to be, the natural consequences of his premises—namely, that he was prepared to announce to the House that it was the intention of the Government to withdraw from Cyprus, or to make some arrangement by which it would be returned to Turkey, at the earliest possible opportunity. But, instead of that, the conclusion to which the right hon. Gentleman came was that we were to remain in Cyprus, though there was opposed to that conclusion nearly every word which fell from the right hon. Gentleman in the course of his speech.

Sir W. HARCOURT: It is much easier to get into a place than to get out of it.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER said, the right hon. Gentleman had got into Egypt, and had not got out of it yet.

He presumed that the right hon. Gentleman was so pleased to hear a speech of his own from which he did not depart—was so pleased to feel that he was still in agreement with a speech he made some years ago, that he could not refrain from revelling in it; and he also made merry about the statements which were made at the time Cyprus was acquired by us. That, however, was before he had the honour of a seat in the House, and a great many years before he had any official experience, so that he did not fell competent to defend the action which was then taken, but, at the same time, it seemed to him that something should be said on behalf of it. This matter occurred in 1878, and we were not then in Egypt. The right hon. Gentleman had asked what was the good of Cyprus when they wanted to get to the East, and pointed out that he and his Party did not go to Cyprus, but went to Alexandria. But it was not until 1882 that the right hon. Gentleman was able to go to Alexandria. He supposed that Lord Beaconsfield at the time consulted naval and military opinion before taking the island over, and that he and his Government did not enter into a solemn engagement with Turkey, without, first of all, ascertaining whether it was capable of being made a useful naval base, and would be a valuable acquisition for strategic purposes. Times, however, had altered, and we now found ourselves in a different position in the Mediterranean. Our position in Cyprus at the present time might be described as obsolete, but that did not justify the right hon. Gentleman in his attack on the Government of the day for having gone there at all. The right hon. Gentleman had made merry over the financial loss we had sustained, and said that if they would go into speculations they would be bound to find themselves at the end of a few years considerably out of pocket. When the Suez Canal shares were bought he violently denounced that speculation, and they were told over and over again that it was a ridiculous financial operation, and a sham, and similar expressions were used, but they had not been found in the mouths of right hon. and hon. Gentlemen lately. Now he ventured to say that if they were to put Cyprus and the Suez Canal shares together and strike a balance between them, that we should be gainers by the transactions. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that the subsidies we had to pay amounted to £30,000 a year, but he found that they varied from £55,000 in the year 1888–9 to nil in the year 1892–3, which made an average of something over £24,000. In 1889–90 it was £45,000, in 1890-1 £35,000, and in 1891-2, £10,000. Last year, however, we had to pay a subsidy, but that was due to the fact that the great agricultural depression, which, falling upon the rest of the world, had not neglected to fall on Cyprus too. He could not help believing, however, that, by proper development, the island might yet be made to pay. At any rate, they might be able to put it in a position as not to have to fall back upon the subsidies of the British Exchequer. A question of policy, however, involving as large a subject as the retention or surrender of Cyprus could not possibly be raised without more notice than had been given on that occasion, and before he could give his assent to either one view or the other he should require something more than the statements they had had during the Debate, and something more from the naval and military authorities than a mere reference to a prize essay from Captain Craigie.

*Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) could not understand why this country should go on finding money for the deficiencies in the revenue of Cyprus—a course which was not pursued in regard to India or any of our great Colonies, who were left to make both ends meet. He had hoped the right hon. Gentleman would have held out some prospect of a discontinuance of this continual drawing from England, but there had been no practical suggestions leading to that conclusion. If the Government expected the Island would improve, it would be better to make a temporary loan, and if there was no prospect of improvement, why should we go on paying? The Chancellor of the Exchequer had put the amount at a very moderate figure. Including, as of course they ought, our mllitary expenditure in Cyprus, the total reached more than £1,000,000. But why was Cyprus reduced to such a sad condition? In former times it was fertile and prosperous. The change was mainly due to the destruction of the forests; and to restore the prosperity they must restore the forests. It was no use merely to plant a few thousand trees here and there. They must close certain tracts one after the other until the trees had attained a sufficient height. He asked the Government to take the matter into their serious consideration. He saw no reason why the deficiency should continue to be made good by the people of this country. He regretted from this point of view that the right hon. Gentleman had no practical suggestions to make. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the Island was not of any value from a naval or military point of view. If it was of no value, then he could not see why this country should continue to pay, year after year, when the money was so much required at home.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) agreed that this was not the time to discuss Imperial policy with regard to Cyprus, but after what had been said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he felt compelled to make an earnest protest on two points. The words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be read all over Europe with surprise that a statement of that kind should come from the Leader of the House of Commons. He had not been surprised at that speech, because it was one of the many speeches on his policy of the shrinkage of the Empire. He had some personal experience of that part of the world, and he had consulted naval, military, and commercial men, and he protested earnestly against the idea that Cyprus should be given up by this country. One of the greatest naval authorities, whose death they all mourned—Admiral Hornby—had pointed out that in the next naval war Cyprus, or some port in that region, would be absolutely essential to their naval supremacy. He looked with apprehension on the peoples of Europe learning that this country was prepared to retire from Cyprus.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I made no such suggestion.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL hoped the right hon. Gentleman would deny that any such interpretation could be put on his words. No one would rejoice at that more than he would, but he thought he must raise a protest against the suggestions that they ought not to continue to hold Cyprus.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) said, it was true this was not the time to raise a question of policy. Cyprus had been referred to in uncomplimentary terms, and he was not going to argue whether it was a white elephant or not—whether the causes of depression were permanent or not—whether it was a good bargain or a bad bargain. The fact remained that they were in Cyprus, and as long as they remained there they were bound by these obligations until they were denounced. In view of the fact that the Turkish Government had disregarded certain obligations, was it not possible for England and France to secure that Turkey should no longer be relieved to the same extent.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he joined in the remarks made by his hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool. The speech of the Leader of the House would be read all over Europe as condemning the policy of the preceding British Government with regard to Cyprus. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman in his sober moments whether he thought that was loyal to the British Empire? He was sure the right hon. Gentleman did not intend to do anything disloyal, but it was one thing to make that speech to an English audience and quite another thing to make it to a European audience. Apart from the very objectionable part of his speech, he agreed with many of his conclusions, which amounted to this—that we are in Cyprus, and being there we had got to do our duty by the island. He must remind the right hon. Gentleman that they had a duty to the people of Cyprus. They had undertaken to rescue them from Turkish rule and govern them on British principles, and that being the case they had rightly or wrongly an obligation towards them. He was thankful to find the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to discharge that obligation. He need not attempt to enter on the policy of their acquiring Cyprus. A great deal was to be said for it, and their occupation of the island was largely connected with events in Asia Minor. He should not at that late hour (6.30) go into that great subject. He desired to offer a few remarks on this particular Vote. He had listened with great attention to what fell from the right Member for the University of London (Sir J. Lubbock). No doubt Cyprus was handicapped with those Turkish obligations; but still it was to him incredible that an island of its fertility and position should fail to prosper, even with the weight of those mortgages, if it had been properly governed. There were administrators in the British Empire who, in a few years, would have made Cyprus pay her charges. He thought it would be more satisfactory to the Committee, when it was called upon to vote a considerable sum towards the expenses of Cyprus, that it should first of all be informed more exactly how this deficit had arisen. All that the Committee had heard was that there had been a shrinkage in certain branches of produce because prices had fallen. That was a meagre and *jejune* explanation. The Committee ought to have an explanation of each head of revenue and expenditure in order to show what were the causes of the deficit. There was a grave apprehension, moreover, in well-informed circles, that Cyprus had never been well administered. He did not presume to lay the blame at the door of anyone, but the apprehension existed all the same that the resources of the Island had not been developed so much as they might have been. He recommended the Government to send out someone who would make a proper report, after inquiry, on two points—first, What had been the causes of the Cyprus deficit; and, second, how could they be averted in the future? Cyprus should be made to cut her coat according to the quantity of her cloth; and if this policy was adopted, he was sure that she would eventually make both ends meet. There ought to be a clear understanding on the part of the Government, and of Parliament, that the Cyprus administration must do the best it could with the money at its disposal, and that it must not come to Parliament for money year after year.

Mr. WILLIAM ALLEN (Newcastle-under-Lyme) thought that the Committee had felt surprise at the conclusion to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had come in his speech. The right hon. Gentleman had made precisely the same speech elsewhere, in which he had described Cyprus as a wretched abortion of an island, and that it was absolutely valueless to this country. After having said all this on former occasions, the right hon. Gentleman voted against these grants; but, on the present occasion, after showing that we were misgoverning Cyprus, and that it was of no actual value, he told the Committee that it was still necessary to grant this money. Usually, when a Government asked Parliament for money towards some object, they had good reason for doing so. In his judgment, there could only be three reasons for asking the Committee to grant money on this occasion. One was that Cyprus was of some value to this country as a military position. The right hon. Baronet (Sir C. Dilke) had quoted one authority on this head. The Cabinet of 1880, of which the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Duke of Devonshire were Members, came to the conclusion that Cyprus was valueless as a military position. The Government of that day had not probably come to this conclusion without first consulting the Military Authorities in the country. Then they ought to look at Cyprus as to whether it was useful from the Naval point of view. There was in the Island the harbour of Famagousta. If it was to be of any use a large amount of money would need to be expended on dredging it, and in building a mole to protect ships. But the late Government had not taken any action to improve or to dredge this harbour, and the present Government were also doing nothing in this respect; and, therefore, the island would be of no use from the Naval point of view. Some hon. Members opposite argued that this country ought to keep Cyprus because the English rule was always beneficial; but this argument amounted to a plea that we should hold every place, whether it was good or whether it was bad for us. What had Cyprus cost this country? The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told the Committee that it had cost us £500,000. Was there any chance that this country would not have to pay as much in the future as we had done in the past? In the Debate of 1879 the right hon. Baronet (Sir C. Dilke) said that the amount of money then asked for, £26,000, was a fleabite;

and the Leader of the Opposition on that occasion traversed the statement of the right hon. Baronet, and came to the conclusion that this Vote could only be asked for on that one occasion. But the Committee now saw that the right hon. Baronet was right, for again and again Parliament had been asked to vote money for Cyprus. The Chancellor of the Exchequer pleaded that if we did not give Cyprus these grants in aid, what were to do? He pointed out in answer to that plea that the Turkish Convention had been broken again and again, that Turkey had not observed any of the agreements which she had entered into as to her dealing with Asia Minor and the improvements to be effected there. We could, therefore, at any moment hand the island back again to Turkey. There was thus no reason why we should still keep Cyprus and continue to pay those large grants in aid, having in view the large amount of the additions to the Navy and other expenditure. He should vote, therefore, in support of the right hon. Baronet if he went to a Division, because he believed that this country should not be called upon to pay these amounts in respect of an island where we were doing no good.

SIR W. HARCOURT hoped that the Committee would allow this Vote to be now taken. He was extremely anxious not to disturb the arrangement with reference to the Navy Estimates on Monday.

MR. R. W. HANBURY contended, on the other hand, that the subject was too important to be disposed of in this manner, especially in view of the right hon. Gentleman's own speech, which practically amounted to a reversal of the policy of previous Governments with regard to Cyprus. There were several hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House anxious to continue the discussion.

*MR. C. BILL (Staffordshire, Leek) said, that some years ago he had had some experience of the island of Cyprus; and having taken a considerable interest in it he was anxious to give his views on this important question. The right hon. Baronet had said that this country was face to face with a very wretched situation in that island. He agreed with the view which the right hon. Gentleman had taken on that point; but when the Chancellor of the Exchequer described the island as a dilapidated property he could not agree with him. If, however, this was the condition of affairs, to whom was the fault due? Cyprus had been a failure because successive Governments had neglected their responsibilities. If the Turkish tribute had been capitalised many years ago, the cost to the Imperial Government, instead of being, as now, £92,000 a year, would have been between £30,000 and £40,000 a year. The Committee would see what a sum of money would have been set free for the development of the island. The Port of Famagusta was certainly in an undredged condition, but it was only 20 hours' steam from the mouth of the Canal, and it was the nearest harbour to that point. So long as the Canal was our route to India, Cyprus ought to be held, and the harbour of Famagusta ought to be improved. The rule of England had been a great benefit to Cyprus. Owing to the good work done by successive governors, the ravages of locusts, which used to ruin the crops, had now been put an end to. Considering the magnificent climate and the splendid agricultural land in Cyprus, the island should prove a most valuable possession if it were properly taken in hand by the Government.

MR. R. PIERPOINT (Warrington), said that it was hard on Cyprus to be treated as a costly possession, seeing that England and France took £92,000 a year out of it. The balance between this grant and England's share of the charge was in favour of Cyprus. He wished to know by what arrangement this £92,000 a year was paid in satisfaction of the 1855 loan; with whom the arrangement was made, and whether it was likely to be permanent? The hon. MEMBER was still speaking when—

It being Ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill.

(In the Committee.)

On Clause 1.

*SIR M. E. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) expressed a hope that the Bill would not be proceeded with at that hour. The measure repealed certain Imperial enactments under which the Australian Colonies were not allowed to impose preferential duties on goods coming from one country as against goods coming from another. It might very well be right to remove those restrictions with respect to the Australian Colonies in dealing with one another; but it was very questionable whether the total repeal of these provisions was necessary. That would enable the colonies to give preferential treatment to a foreign country as against the mother country. Such a proposal ought to be properly considered.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (MR. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said, that he would postpone the further consideration of the Bill if the Right hon. Gentleman desired it.

Progress reported, Committee to sit again on Monday next.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

The Report of the following votes agreed to in Committee of Supply on 7th March, was brought up and agreed to:—Miscellaneous Legal Expenses, £7,000; Relief of Distress in Ireland, £35,000; County Courts, £10; Law Charges and Courts of Law (Scotland), £5,125; General Register House, Edinburgh, £500.

Sitting suspended at Five minutes to Seven of the clock.

EVENING SITTING.

The House resumed at Nine of the clock.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Notice taken that 40 Members were not present; House counted and 40 Members being present—

LOCAL TAXATION IN URBAN DISTRICTS.

*MR. A. D. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars) said, he rose to propose the Motion, notice of which, stood upon the Paper. Nothing he could say would add to the importance of the subject. The question of local taxation must come before the House every Session in some form, and the House was likely in the near future to hear more about it in the form he proposed to deal with it than had been heard in the past. Local authorities and municipalities had had to deal with a large increase of urban taxation during recent years, and the Government had recognised the importance of the question, inasmuch as they included the taxation of land values in the Newcastle Programme. He intended to deal with a part only of what was included there, his Motion being framed to exclude taxation dealing with agricultural land. There were several reasons for that, one of which was to simplify the question so as to enable the House to deal with it within the limits of an Evening Sitting. The urban question was of enormously greater importance than the rural question, as the amount of rates raised was so much larger, and the amount of money borrowed by urban authorities to carry out improvements represented nearly the whole of the local indebtedness. In a few words he would state the grievance of which he had to complain. It was that occupiers paid the rates, and that the maintenance of the city, and the public improvements paid for out of those rates raised the value of the whole of the land under each town or city; and this increased value was realised by increased rents. Occupiers were, in fact, rented for advantages arising out of improvements and works paid for almost entirely with their own money. The increase in the value of town land went to the owners who, in England, paid almost no rates at all, and in Scotland and Ireland only a part of them. He could not state the matter more briefly and pertinently than by quoting to the House the words used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square (Mr. Goschen), when President of the Local Government Board. On 3rd April 1871, in introducing his Local Taxation Bills, the right hon. Gentleman said:

> "The result of the present state of things has been that many great improvements in the Metropolis, in Liverpool, in Manchester, and in other large towns, have been made in the last ten years exclusively at the cost of the occupiers without the landlords contributing a single shilling towards the expenditure."

That which had gone on for ten years prior to 1871, had continued for more than 20 years since on a larger scale; urban rates had increased faster during the past 20 years than they increased before the time when the right hon. Gentleman addressed the House on the subject, and were increasing faster now than ever. So the time had come for putting before the House a reasonable and equitable proposal, which would have the effect of making a fairer adjustment of taxation where land was built upon, and would open a new source of taxation altogether where land is vacant and unoccupied by buildings. The rise in the value of urban land had been altogether created by the increase of population, the consequent wealth arising from their industry, and the public improvements carried out, and there could be no doubt of the equity of the public taking for the public use as much as was practicable of that value which had been created by themselves. The expenditure in urban districts from rates was enormous, but beyond this, urban authorities had borrowed largely, and the present debt of local authorities exceeded £200,000,000 sterling; of which only about £4,000,000 were owing from rural authorities, £13,000,000 from authorities partly urban and partly rural, and nearly £184,000,000 were owing by urban authorities. Our local debts were increasing faster than our National Debt was being paid off, and the purposes for which this money was borrowed and expended had been directly the means of increasing the value of the land upon which the towns were built—such improvements as new highways, streets, sewers, markets, bridges, libraries, drainage, harbours, docks, &c., all of which increased the value of the land in towns. In reference to the present rating in urban and rural districts the President of the Local Government Board said, in the Report issued last year:—

> "At no time during the century for which statistics are available had the average rural rates in the £ been so low or the rates in London been so high."

And the rates in London had since increased. As illustrating the increase in urban values he instanced Glasgow and London. In the twenty years between 1871 and 1891 the increase of rental value in Glasgow had been £1,330,000, or 62½ per cent., and the capitalised value of that was not less than £20,000,000. In London, during the same period, the increase in ratable value had been about £17,700,000; the capitalised value of which would be quite £250,000,000. No doubt the greater portion of that represented the value of new buildings, but, after allowing for those, there must have been an enormous increase in the value of the land, and that had gone directly to the owners of it, who had contributed little or nothing to create it. Two objections had been urged to the taxation of land values. It was said land in cities was taxed locally now, and that was true, as it was rated with the house standing upon it, but the rates were rarely paid by the landlord. Then, further, it was said it was impossible to discriminate between the value of the land and the value of the buildings on it, and that, separate assessment was, therefore, impracticable. In their Report of 1892, the Town Holdings Committee said that, in their judgment, separate assessment was not practicable; but there were different ways in which the land under cities could be taxed. It might be rated separately from the houses or it might be taxed in a way similar to the Land Tax, or a municipal death duty might be imposed. The grievance and the necessity for redress being shown, no doubt, in some way, a method of taxation could be discovered. Though that Committee considered separate assessment impracticable, they said nothing of any other method of taxation; they did not report anything against the plan of municipal death duties. No doubt there would be difficulties in connection with carrying it out, but they were not insuperable. Other Committees had sat and reported on the subject besides the Town Holdings Committee. The London County Council had given great attention to it, and had passed a resolution to the effect that land might, and should be, assessed separately from houses. A Corporation Committee had been appointed in Glasgow to deal with the taxation of future unearned increment. They had received an interim report from the City Assessor proposing a plan, but had come to no decision. Various schemes had been propounded for the taxation of land separate from houses, and the equitable adjustment of the amount amongst those liable; the whole of which seemed to be based on a sub-section of Clause 1 of the Report of the Select Committee on Local Taxation of 1871, of which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square (Mr. Goschen) was chairman, to whom the House was indebted for much valuable information in reference to local taxation. The sub-section was—

> "That, subject to equitable arrangements as regards existing contracts, the rates should be collected as at present from the occupier, except in the case of small tenements for which the landlord can now by law be rated, power being given to the occupier to take from his rent the proportion of the rates to which the owner may be made liable, and provision being made to render persons having superior or intermediate interests liable to proportionate deductions from the rents received by them, as in the case of the Income Tax, with a like prohibition against agreements in contravention of the law."

Let the House then consider what would be a new source of taxation—vacant land. It was true that the Report of the Select Committee three years ago said that the land where there was a building upon it could not be separately assessed from the building; that to do so was impracticable. But there was nothing impracticable in the assessment of vacant land; however, the Committee objected to it on the ground that it would be taxation of capital. They concurred in the view that by far the most effective cause of increased value of vacant land was the growth of the neighbouring population, which created a demand for land, and that that increase was what was known as "unearned increment." But they thought that if vacant land were taxed separately, it would be a tax on capital value, and that would be a departure from the existing basis of local taxation, and would be difficult in operation. He saw no difficulty as to its operation, and with respect to its being taxation of capital value the Committee reported that the principle appeared to be one of a far-reaching character, and if adopted its application might have to be extended to other forms of property. But, they added, it was a principle upon which economists of high authority entirely differ. Therefore there were two sides to the question. But the capital value of land was created by the increase of population; and their fears of the principle being extended to other kinds of property were groundless, as there was no other kind of property in which value was created in the same way. If population did not come, there could be no increase of value to the land, and if population did come, an increase in the value of the land necessarily followed. The Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes in 1885 reported quite differently from the Select Committee on Town Holdings in 1892, and with the permission of the House he would read a few lines from the Report:—

> "At present, land available for building in the neighbourhood of our populous centres, though its capital value is very great, is probably producing a small yearly return until it is let for building. The owners of this land are rated no in relation to the real value, but to the actual annual income. They can thus afford to keep their land out of the market, and to part with only small quantities so as to raise the price beyond the natural monopoly price which the land would command by its advantages of position. Meantime, the general expenditure of the town on improvements is increasing the value of their property. If this land were rated at say 4 per cent. on its selling value, the owners would have a more direct incentive to part with it to those who are desirous of building, and a twofold advantage would result to the community. First, all the valuable property would

> contribute to the rates, and thus the burden on the occupiers would be diminished by the increase in the rateable property. Secondly, the owners of the building land would be forced to offer their land for sale, and thus their competition with one another would bring down the price of building land, and so diminish the tax in the shape of ground rent or price paid for land, which is now levied on urban enterprise by the adjacent landowners a tax, be it remembered, which is no recompense *for any industry or expenditure on their part*, but is the natural result of the industry and activity of the townspeople themselves."

Quite so. They pointed out that the whole value was created by the townspeople themselves, while it passed into the possession of the few who happened to own the land. Indeed, so little was the enhanced value due to the owner of the site that he might be an imbecile or an infant, it was not necessary that he should do anything, the increase in the value of the land would go on steadily with the aggregation and industry of the surrounding population. If vacant land were taxed, it would certainly make an enormous difference to the municipalities. In the case of Glasgow—the only city he would refer to, as it was a representative city, and the others were all in a like position—Glasgow, with a municipal area of 11,861 acres, had 3,500 acres still available for building purposes, and the whole value of this 3,500 acres was derived from those who lived in the city, their industry and expenditure, while the owners of the vacant land contributed nothing to the maintenance of the city. He might give many illustrations of the hardships arising from the inequitable methods by which urban rates were assessed at the present time; and it was undoubtedly the case that a remedy was necessary which local authorities required the assistance of the House to provide. The London County Council introduced a private Bill two years ago to reform the system of rating, because, in their judgment, they thought it would be best to proceed by private Bill. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Thanet put a Motion on the Paper which prevented them from proceeding with it, and nothing had been done. To say that a private Member might introduce a public Bill to deal with the question was to dismiss the question to a future which it was impossible to estimate. No private Member, as they all knew, could bring forward any Bill except by the chance of the ballot, and he might be many years before he was fortunate enough to secure a place. They must either have the assistance of the Government in that matter, or a private Member must be given an opportunity of dealing with the question. Otherwise it might be shelved for a long time to come. The Government had already recognised, not only the necessity of rating urban land values with which he had dealt, but the whole question, inasmuch as they had put it down in their programme as a reform with which they would deal as soon as an opportunity was given to them. He was sure that that question appealed more directly to the majority of the inhabitants in towns than almost any of the other questions which so far had not been dealt with by the Government since the programme referred to was issued. He, therefore, hoped they might reasonably expect some Member of the Government to state what their intentions were on the subject. Meantime, he would content himself by moving -

> "That no system of taxation can be equitable unless it includes the direct assessment of the enhanced value of land due to the increase of population and wealth and the growth of towns."

*Mr. **J. FLETCHER MOULTON** (Hackney, S.) in seconding the Motion, said, he felt that in bringing the subject before the House no apology was needed from the nature of the subject itself. They all knew that the local Budget of this country was assuming such gigantic proportions that already it was something like two-thirds of the Imperial Budget; and that already the Local Authorities had run up a National Debt of some £200,000,000, which far exceeded the extent to which we had paid off the national indebtedness of the country during the last few years. It was also well-known that the sources of revenue for local authorities were necessarily restricted in their nature, and that we could not admit any source to be availed of that would limit the free circulation either of persons as residents or articles of commerce. The revenue must come from something local, the putting taxes upon which would not cripple the community; and those who had given their attention to local revenues knew how very great and pressing such restrictions were. There were, therefore, but few sources, and beyond all contest the great source of local revenues now and in future must be local rates. At the present time they were the source of nominally one half, really far more, of the whole of the local revenues of this country. To put them on a proper foundation was a task worthy of any statesman, however great. We had certainly got the principles of Imperial taxation settled to a very great extent. Our taxes were few; they were based on great principles, and there was no wish to add to them. When the House turned to local taxation they found that the great burden of local taxation was borne by a source which, in the opinion of both sides of the House, was radically wrong in its present incidence, and that it should be left in that state was a disgrace. He did not want to make a speech that would arouse opposition. He believed that if in this matter they could banish conventional hostility, and talk on this subject without passion, they would find that the points of difference between the two sides of the House were far less important than was believed. He thought he could show that the principles which had been accepted by those who sat on the other side of the House led in their logical consequences so near to the reform which they on the Ministerial side of the House advocated, that but little would be required to accomplish it, and unless and until it was accomplished no great reform in local taxation could take place. The present condition of rates was such that, until they disentangled the two types of taxation that lurked within it, no one could consent to the rates being made more burdensome. That part which it was safe to tax more heavily was so mixed and covered by the other, that he felt sure public opinion would be against rates producing their proper return to the community, until they had accomplished the reform which would disentangle the two conflicting elements. He had said that he did not believe that the difference between the two sides of the House was so great as was supposed. If they looked at the Town Holdings Commission Report of 1892 it would be found that they gave two recommendations. One was—that half the rates ought to be borne by the occupier and half by the owner; and the other was—that any contract altering that incidence of rates should be declared invalid and void in law. What did those two recommendations mean? The second recommendation was really the more important; it was that people should not alter the incidence of taxation by contracts between themselves. What a farce it was for Parliament to discuss what should be the incidence of local taxation when they knew that every lease set at defiance their decision, and that by leases the landlords of London had carved out of London's revenues the most valuable portion, and had sheltered it from the burden of municipal rates. The state of things was as bad as it was in France in the old days, when the greater part of the property was owned by the clergy and the nobility, and they paid no taxes. By their contracts the landlords of our towns had completely sheltered all the best portions of the revenues of those towns from any contribution to the burdens of the municipalities. In fact, throughout all the towns of England it was the persons who paid the rents who also paid the rates, and not the persons who received the rents. When persons insisted that London could easily bear the burden of its rates, did they reflect that the £8,000,000 of rates did not come out of the £33,000,000 of rental value, but that the £33,000,000 passed into the hands of owners without contributing a penny to the rates. This recommendation of the Town Holdings Committee showed that they were of opinion that this shielding of revenue from rates ought to cease, and that the incidence of rates ought to be determined by law, and not altered by contract. But almost as important was their other decision that rates ought to be borne one half by occupiers and one half by owners. He did not accept that division, but the recommendation might be accepted for argument's sake. It showed that in the opinion of opponents a portion of the rates ought to be borne by owners. How was this to be levied? No two classes of property could be more distinct than buildings and land. The land could not wither; it could not become useless; it could not have to be replaced; it remained, and was enhanced in value by improvements to the cost of which it contributed nothing. Buildings were the direct outlay of capital, and required to be maintained; they decayed and became obsolete, and so the capital spent upon them was lost. Therefore, you could not apply to both the same measure of annual value. Surveyors knew that the capital value of land is something like 30 times its annual return, while the capital value of buildings is only 16 times their annual return; and, therefore, under our present system we really tax buildings twice as heavily as we tax land. It was marvellous how some people deluded themselves by fancying that land in towns obtained increase of value from some mystic source which cost nobody anything. Stop our Municipal expenditure on streets, cleansing, lighting, and the land in Belgrave Square would have no value. That value was as much the direct consequence of municipal expenditure as a crop of coffee was the result of the upkeep of an estate. If we were going to draw municipal taxes from these two classes of property, we must separate them and apportion different rates of taxation to each. If ever there was a property that ought to contribute largely to municipal revenue, it certainly was land which so greatly benefited by it. Two of the most remarkable features of social life were the enormous rise of expenditure in towns, and the enormous rise in the value of town land; the two went together, and one followed the other, and furnished the source from which the necessary expenditure might be supplied. It was said it was impracticable to separate the value of land from that of houses. Well, he had had some experience in compensation cases, and he never knew a case, certainly not in London, in which the witnesses on both sides did not value first the land and then the buildings upon it. It was almost the universal custom to separate the two elements. What was practicable in valuation was practicable in assessment, and he could not understand the alleged difficulty in tracing the annual value of land to the hands that received it. It was a fundamental principle with those who advocated the reform in local taxation, that not a pound should come into the hands of any one from the land of towns, but it should pay its tax. They had got to find out where the revenue went to, and there they must get the tax. If the return from any piece of land was £100, and if the person paying it deducted the rate as he did the landlord's property tax, they would accomplish what they desired in taxing this revenue. Antagonists divided themselves into two classes, one alleging that the landlords paid all the taxes, and the other that the tenants did so. The truth was, that under the present system we did not know the incidence of taxation. The burden of rates was a terror to dwellers in towns. During the last six years in London the London County Council had deliberately, with the approval of the ratepayers, refused to carry out improvements because of the great and ever increasing burden of the rates. The most serious wants of the towns were going unsatisfied because taxation was imposed in such a way that the occupier had to bear the burden, and until the rates were separated into that which ought to be borne by the land, and which ought to be borne by the buildings, and that which ought to be borne by the occupier, those wants could not be satisfied. It was their duty to see that the incidence of taxation was fair. Everyone, whatever his views on the subject were, ought surely to see, and the first duty incumbent on the House was to make local taxation take its true shape, and to take care that those people should pay who ought to pay. He called upon all in the House who desired that the taxes should not be an unnecessary burden on the people, and who would not allow their eyes to be shut to injustice, to take care that local taxation should be placed on a basis by which its incidence could be told, and by which the fairness of its incidence might be secured.

*MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.), who had on the Paper an Amendment to leave out from "no," and add—

> "Legislation which may be proposed to this House on the subject of the direct assessment of the enhanced value of land due to the increase of population and wealth and the growth of towns is expedient, unless it is based upon the recommendations of the Select Committee on Town Holdings, which, after an investigation extending over nearly seven years, presented a Report to this House in May 1892,"

said, that he rose with some diffidence to address the House on this question, but his excuse must be that for five years he had had the honour of being a member of the Town Holdings Committee, and he hoped he might be able to talk without passion or conventionality on a difficult and complicated question. In the first place, he would like to point out that the hon. Member who opened the Debate brought forward no definite proposal. The hon. Member for South Hackney, however, brought forward a definite proposal, but he hoped to be able to show the House that it was an objectionable proposal. He would remind the House of a notice which appeared on the Paper on Tuesday last in the name of the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Macdonald), dealing with the subject matter of the present Motion. That Motion went one step further than the one under discussion. It was at first definite but misleading; and then it was altered, and became like the Motion of the hon. Member for Glasgow, indefinite. It was, he thought, desirable to call attention to that matter in order to show the House how these would-be Reformers and Progressives were unable to agree among themselves on the proposal that ought to be adopted with regard to the question of the taxation of ground rents. That Motion asked the House of Commons to commit itself to a definite misstatement of fact. Its terms were:—

> "No system of taxation can be equitable, unless a direct assessment be imposed on the owners of ground rents and on the owners of increased values imparted to land by building operations or other improvements, as recommended by the Royal Commission on the Housing of the working classes."

In point of fact, the recommendations attributed to the Royal Commissioners were not to be found in their Report. The Royal Commissioners reported that the present system of local taxation was unsatisfactory, but that they were not authorised by the terms of their Commission to "go generally into the question of local taxation." They did make a recommendation with regard to the rating of vacant building land (on which subject they had heard no evidence); but, with regard to the "direct assessment" of "owners of ground rents" and "of increased values imparted to land by building operations and other improvements," they made no recommendations whatever. The hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets seemed to have copied the terms of the reference to the Town Holdings Committee, and to have put down as findings of the Royal Commission proposals into which the Town Holdings Committee were directed to inquire. It was difficult to resist the conclusion that the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets had taken his facts at second-hand, for precisely the same mistake was made in a pamphlet prepared by Mr. Sidney Webb for the United Committee for advocating the taxation of ground rents and values. But he passed on for a moment from these indefinite, and, as he hoped to show, objectionable, proposals, and would take some of the points raised in the Debate with regard to the question of the unearned increment of land. On that he would quote the words of Professor Fawcett. Speaking on the proposal that the State should appropriate the unearned increment of land, he said:—

> "It seems to us that it can neither be defended on grounds of justice nor expediency. If the State appropriated this unearned increment, would it not be bound to give compensation if land became depreciated . ? . . . If the State in prosperous times appropriates an increase in value, and if in adverse times the falling off in value has to be borne by the owner, land would at once have a disability attached to it which belongs to no other property."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking some time ago at Oxford, said:—

> "I shall not discuss with you the 'unearned increment of land.' That is an idea so illogical, so unreasonable, so perfectly unjust, and so absolutely 'philosophical,' that it does not require a refutation."

AN HON. MEMBER: When was that?

*MR. LEES KNOWLES: In 1874. Since the Report of the Royal Commission was issued, the proposals embodied in the Motion had been exhaustively considered and reported on by the Town Holdings Committee. That Committee arrived clearly at the conclusion that ground rents were already rated. The following were extracts from the Report:—

> "The idea that ground rents are a class of property which at present escapes assessment for the purposes of local taxation is, of course, quite erroneous. The basis of all rating is the whole annual value of the building and of the land on which it stands, regarded as one entire property. In the ordinary case of a house subject to a ground rent, and let by the owner to the

occupier at a rack rent, the several interests of the ground landlord, of the owner of the house, and of the occupier, constitute together the subject-matter of an assessment which is made upon the property as a whole. There appears to have been a popular impression that ground rents constitute a subject-matter of assessment hitherto untouched, and that a new and fresh source of revenue for local purposes would be 'tapped' by imposing a direct assessment on such ground rents, in addition to the present assessment of the whole property. But this view was found not to bear examination. It was soon seen that the assessed value of the house includes that of all the various interests above enumerated, and that to put a direct assessment on the ground rent, in addition to the existing assessment of the house, would be to rate a certain portion of the value twice over."

"Upon the whole, the conclusion we have arrived at is that in the inception of the ground lease, allowance is made on account of the existing and contemplated rates, and that the amount of such allowance is deducted from the ground rent, which might otherwise be charged, and that to the extent of such allowance the owner of the ground rent indirectly bears the burden of rates, in the sense that if this burden were remitted he would be able to obtain a ground rent increased by the amount so allowed for."

The Town Holdings Committee took Scotch as well as English evidence, and found as follows:—

> "Ground rents and feu duties are already taxed as being included in the rateable value of the town holding on which they are secured. They do not constitute a fresh matter of assessment hitherto untouched, as is often supposed. The imposition of a direct assessment upon such ground rents and feu duties as distinguished from the assessed value of the house itself, as at present rated, would lead to anomalies and inequalities, and has been generally abandoned."

With reference to the incidence of taxation, the Town Holdings Committee said—

> "The real, as opposed to the apparent incidence of local taxation in towns, falls partly upon the owner of the land, partly upon the householder, and partly upon the occupier. The proportions in which the burden is distributed are difficult to determine, and depend upon a variety of circumstances, among which the demand for and supply of houses is the most important."

Therefore, it would appear from the findings of the Town Holdings Committee, that the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney was wrong when he said that the rates fell upon the occupier. But, if further evidence were wanted, there was the statement made by the right hon. Member for Midlothian, at Ormskirk, in 1868. The right hon. Member said—

> "We all must agree that the ultimate burden of the rates comes upon the landlord. Whether they be parochial rates or borough rates, they will at last find their way to the landlord."

Then, as to the landlord's having a voice on the subject of expenditure, the right hon. Member said—

> "The sole power of voting in the parish vestries is with the ratepayer, and if the landlord happens not to be an occupier he has no control whatever over the rates."

If this proposal for the rating of ground rents were agreed to, whom would it benefit and whom would it injure? If the right hon. Member for Midlothian and the Town Holdings Committee were right, and ground rents were already rated, it would be unjust to rate them over again. If this were done the people who would be most injured would not be the great ground landlords, but the vast class of small investors in ground rents, who were, perhaps, the most deserving class in the community. The aggregate property of these persons probably exceeded by far the aggregate property of the great owners, who were attacked so violently. In his evidence before the Town Holdings Committee, Sir Thomas Farrer, now Lord Farrer, stated that he had received the following letter from a correspondent:—

> "I should like to put before you the following case, which is typical of tens of thousands in this country:—I am trustee for a lady whose whole income consists of £157 2s. 6d., derived from leasehold ground rents near King's Cross, bought for her by a thoughtful, thrifty husband some time back. She receives £194 2s. 6d., and pays the freeholder £37. She has only a nominal reversion of three days to the rack-rents. In 16 years she loses her income entirely, as the property reverts to the freeholder. Can you tell me upon what principle of right or justice this poor lady is at one swoop to be deprived of 20 per cent. of her income? Is it because the Thames Embankment and other distant improvements are supposed to have improved her property? The answer is, her property has depreciated in gross annual value during the last 25 years, but even if it could be demonstrated that these distant improvements have benefited her property, they could not possibly benefit her. If you made London a city of palaces, and paved the streets with gold, she would not be one penny the richer. Her rents were fixed 82 years ago for all her term, and as far as she is concerned they are absolutely unalterable."

Sir Thomas Farrer admitted that this letter contained a very strong case, and could not deny that there were many others like it.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) asked whether Sir Thomas Farrer did not read this letter in illustration of some of the difficulties which would have to be met, but not in support of opinions which he held himself. What he wanted the House to hear was Sir Thomas Farrer's own view.

*Mr. LEES KNOWLES referred the hon. Member to Sir Thomas Farrer's evidence. The letter was read by the witness when answering question 1,326 of 1890. Other illustrations which he wished to bring before the notice of the House were given in the evidence of Mr. George Beken, a surveyor and land agent, who said—

> "There are hundreds of thousands of the industrial and middle classes who have small savings invested in ground rents through the instrumentality of benefit and insurance societies, besides innumerable private investors and trustees who purchase ground rents as a safe investment, and can ill afford to be victimised by extra taxation."

Mr. Beken quoted the following cases taken from the business transactions of his firm :—

> (1.) A messenger for many years to a firm in the City has purchased £16 per annum for £360, and £29 per annum for £650. He referred to these two investments as his "little all." (2.) A photographer invested about £500 in ground rents, part freehold and part leasehold. Has been several years in business. Has three or four children. (3.) A barmaid recently invested £368 in buying £15 15s. 0d. per annum. Mr. Beken was informed that this was all she possessed except £50 or £60. (4.) A small grocer, been about 15 years in business in the City, made four investments in ground rents. The first was for £244, the others about £500 each, giving a total income of about £80 per annum. Speaking to Mr. Beken on the question, he ended by saying that he had worked for all he had got. (5.) A spinster recently invested a small legacy of £300 in the purchase of ground rents amounting to £15 per annum.

Mr. Beken also quoted the cases of two Benefit Societies, and of one Insurance Company :—

> (1.) The "Hearts of Oak" Benefit Society consists of working men, and has over 120,000 members, with assets over £1,000,000. Of this, £200,000 is invested in ground rents. (2.) Another society (a small temperance body) had, in 1889, 4,700 members, with assets £33,000. Of this, £19,800, or more than half their capital, was invested in ground rents. (3.) The "Prudential" Insurance Company, according to their balance-sheet of 31st December, 1890, have 220,000 policies in force in the ordinary branch, with a capital liability of £4,400,000, also 900,000 policies in force in the industrial branch, with a capital liability of £7,900,000. They have assets of £12,500,000, with £2,040,100 in freehold ground rents and Scotch feu duties, or nearly 16 per cent. of their capital. A large proportion of the policy holders in this society are working men.

So much for the case of existing ground rents. As regarded future ground rents, the Town Holdings Committee recommended a division of rates between the occupier and all the ownership interests, including rack rents as well as the various forms of ground rents. This proposal did not appear to to meet with the approval of the London "Progressives," for at a meeting of the London County Council on November 3rd, 1891, Lord Hobhouse, on behalf of the Local Taxation Committee of that body, having presented a Report in favour of a division of rates, Mr. Stuart (Hoxton Division of Shoreditch) moved and carried an Amendment which shelved the Report. The London Progressives had hitherto hopelessly failed to agree among themselves as to the scheme by means of which taxation of ground values was to be carried out. The Town Holdings Committee said—

> "We observe that there is little agreement among those who concur in thinking that the present system is unjust, and that reform is urgently required. The plan of assessing reversions proposed by Mr. Harrison is rejected by Sir Thomas Farrer, and is incompatible with the scheme for the separate assessment of ground and building values advocated by Mr. Moulton (South Hackney), which Sir Thomas Farrer also disapproves of. Mr. Moulton's plan is inconsistent with the proposal for the division of rates between occupier and owner approved of by many of the witnesses. The imposition of municipal death duties is supported by Sir Thomas Farrer and Mr. Costelloe, but is at variance with the views of Mr. Harrison and Mr. Moulton, while the proposal to tax vacant land was not accepted by Sir Thomas Farrer or Professor Thorold Rogers, and is only adopted in a very qualified form by Professor Munro."

The fact that Mr. Moulton gave evidence strengthened this Report. That the Progressives were still unable to agree among themselves was obvious from the proceedings of the London County Council last year. On 16th January, 1894 (nearly two years after the second "Progressive" Council had been elected), a scheme for the taxation of ground values was at last presented to the Council by its Local Taxation Committee. The framework of the scheme was set out in sixteen recommendations. The fate of the Committee's unhappy Report might be stated in the words of Mr. Charles Harrison, the Chairman of the Progressive Party—

> "Not one of the recommendations was carried or adopted by the Council."

A resolution was, however, carried, to inform the Government that it was imperatively urgent that "a measure" (what measure was not stated) should be passed in the next Session (1894) for the taxation of "ground values," and to forward to the Government a number of documents, including the Committee's Report, a conflicting scheme prepared by Mr. Harrison, and other papers. The hon. Member for South Hackney having particularly alluded to the subject of different scales for the taxation of land and buildings, it was only fair he should read just one passage in the Report of the Town Holdings Committee in which this subject was dealt with:—

> "It is said that the only way to effect the taxation of land and buildings on different scales is by the separate assessment of each. This system does not, however, seem to us to possess the advantages claimed for it by its advocates. In the first place, the feasibility of splitting up the value of an entire property consisting of a house and its site, so as to assign to each element its proper value, is disputed, not only by such witnesses as Sir Thomas Farrer (now Lord Farrer) and Mr. Thorold Rogers, but by men eminent in the very profession whose duty it would be to make such valuation. It is admitted that the valuation would have to be made by professional experts, and it is the almost unanimous opinion of the surveyors who gave evidence before the Committee, that to adopt the plan suggested by Mr. Moulton, viz., to estimate the value of the land as if it were a vacant site, and that of the buildings at a certain percentage on its cost, would not necessarily give at all an accurate estimate of the annual value of the whole subject-matter. That which has to be valued is, alter all, the property as it actually exists in its entirety, in which all the parties, whether occupier, lessee, intermediate lessee, or freeholder, are interested."

So much for that part of the subject. He would touch briefly the question of taxation without representation. This was an aspect of the case that was ignored in the speeches of the Progressives. They talked of the direct taxation of owners, but they forgot the correlative question of the representation of owners. Before owners were asked to contribute directly to local expenditure they ought at least to have some voice in deciding whether the expenditure should be undertaken, but this motion would place them at the mercy of bodies upon which they, as owners, had no representation whatever. Further than that, two Select Committees of the House of Commons had emphatically affirmed that local taxation and local representation must go together. Mr. Goschen's Committee of 1870 reported—

> "That, in the event of any division of rates between the owner and the occupier, it is essential that such alterations should be made in the constitution of the bodies administering the rates as would secure a direct representation of owners adequate to the immediate interest in local expenditure which they would thus have acquired."

The Town Holdings Committee, in their Report, stated that they were "clearly of opinion" that, in the event of a division of rates, "the claim for such representation must be met." He believed that, by the rules of the House, he should not be able to move his Amendment; but the case against the Motion might be briefly summed up thus: It asked the House of Commons in effect to ignore the finding of its own two Committees; the ground rents which it proposed to assess were already assessed, and if assessed again would be rated twice over, and the chief sufferers by this injustice would be the vast class of small investors in this form of property. It was impossible to gather from the motion what scheme for the taxation of ground rents the mover favoured, and would-be reformers, including the London "Progressives," were hopelessly at variance with one another on the subject. In any case, the direct assessment of owners could not properly be expected without corresponding provision for their direct representation on local bodies in accordance with the recommendations of the two Committees of the House of Commons.

*MR. H. E. KEARLEY (Devonport) desired the indulgence of the House whilst he stated the evils resulting from the present system of local taxation, of which those who supported the Motion complained. The borough of Devonport, which he represented, was essentially a landlord's town, and he should endeavour to point out the evil effects the holding of land by the Manorial Lord had upon the locality. The area of the borough was 1,760 acres, of which only 460 had been built upon, leaving 1,300 acres in the centre of the town which were let out by the manorial landlord for accommodation purposes. The effect on the town was most remarkable. Overcrowding existed in Devonport to a greater extent than in any other town in England, with one or two exceptions. As an evidence of this he might state that 60,000 people were housed in 5,000 dwellings. Although there had been repeated attempts by agitation and other methods to break down the land monopoly, no success whatever had been achieved until within the last few months, when, owing to pressure of public opinion on this matter, and the fact that the Medical Officer had pointed out the great evils which resulted from overcrowding, the manorial landlord did at last agree to sell two acres of land for the purpose of erecting workmen's dwellings. On the occasion of the handing over of the land for this object there was a great ceremonial, the event being regarded as the dawning of a better era for the locality. These two acres were probably the worst in the whole place, and yet the price at which the land was sold was something like £1,300 an acre. But outside the few houses that had been erected for the working classes on these two acres, the system of housing in Devonport was the most pernicious of all, namely, the system of tenement houses. He had seen as many as twelve families residing in one house, and the census returns set forth, in a very pronounced way, the terrible effects accruing from this overcrowding. They gave the percentage of the population thus overcrowded in tenements in the various towns. Gateshead had the dishonour of heading the list with a percentage of 40·7; Newcastle came next with 35·8; Sunderland third with 32·85; and Plymouth and Devonport were fourth on the list with 26·27. The last on the list was Portsmouth, a town exactly similar in all respects, save that it was built on freehold soil, to Devonport. In Devonport the figures were 26·27, while in Portsmouth they were only 1·74. Under the head of the number of tenements of less than five rooms it was proved by the census that Devonport was worse than London. In England and Wales tenements of one room only numbered 47 per thousand. In London the number was 184 per thousand, and in Devonport and Plymouth it was 244 per thousand. The cause of this overcrowding was nothing else but the hoarding up of land by the landlord, which was suitable for the erection of habitations for the people. The landlord of Devonport drew an income of £60,000 a year from land values, which practically escaped taxation altogether. He had in the midst of the town three-fourths of the land which was not built upon at all, but which was let out as accommodation land, and brought in a rental of £3,700 a year. There was no difficulty in arriving at what the land would bring in to the Municipality if it were taxed for local purposes and assessed at its true capital value. Sales of land which recently took place in the immediate vicinity of Devonport showed that the value of this particular land for building purposes was 18d. per foot, or £3,200 per acre, and so its capital value was £500,000, and it required no effort of the imagination to arrive at the opinion that if that land were taxed at its true value, not only would the local rates be enormously relieved, but such taxation would cause the land to come into the market, and the people would be properly housed. But the manorial landlord of Devonport not only hoarded up land in this fashion, but he actually taxed the people on entering and leaving the town. He had erected bridges over which the people must go to get into and out of the town. There was no possibility of any other highways being opened, because the landlord was the owner of the land at each side of the water crossed, and which those bridges presented free access between the Three Towns. A Committee of the local governing bodies was formed in 1880, and they approached the manorial landlord to see if they could not purchase their freedom by buying the bridges, but the landlord refused to quote a price. However, in 1887 the landlord did quote a price, which was £125,000, and considering that these bridges could only have cost £8,000 to erect, this demand represented an additional imposition on the community. It was obvious that the yearly increasing revenue of the bridges arose from the growth in the population of the district, but if there were a proper system of taxation of land values there would be no encouragement of these actions of landlords which were so detrimental to the interests of the people.

MR. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds Central) said, that the circumstances of Devonport, judged from the hon. Gentleman's account, seemed to be that the land in the neighbourhood of the town was monopolised by a single landlord. He was not the slightest inclined to deny that where land in the neighbourhood of a town was monopolised by a single landlord who did not desire to develop his land, a case existed for legislation, but the case quoted by the hon. Member for Devonport had nothing to do with the particular form of local taxation advocated in the motion. The hon. Member said that this landlord, who owned the entire land in the neighbourhood of Devonport other than the land held by the Government had an income of £3,700 a year.

*MR. KEARLEY said his point was that the income of the land not built upon was £3,700 a year.

MR. G. W. BALFOUR said, that as the capital value of the same land, if built upon, would be £500,000 a year, it was quite clear that the landlord must be losing very large sums every year. If the facts were as the hon. Member for Devonport had described, he thought it was owing to the idiosyncrasy of the landlord and not to a defect in the system of taxation. The hon. Member for South Hackney had expressed the opinion that the differences between the two sides of the House in regard to this question were perhaps not so great as they appeared to be. He hoped that might prove to be so, but he could not altogether follow the reasoning by which the hon. Member sought to sustain that that position. The hon. Member had described two recommendations of the Select Committee—first, that rates should be divided between the occupier and the owner; and, secondly, that any other arrangement than this should be considered illegal—as being decisions of the House.

*MR. J. FLETCHER MOULTON said, he certainly did not intend to use that language, if he had done so.

MR. G. W. BALFOUR said, in any case the hon. Member was very severe upon landlords who, notwithstanding the recommendations made by the Select Committee, continued to grant leases in the usual form, by which leases, he said, a certain proportion of the landed property was shielded from taxation. It was true that the Select Committee made the recommendations which had been quoted, but, when the hon. Member went on to say that, according to the view of the Committee the incidence of rates ought to be determined by law and not by contract, he must permit him to say that there was a distinction between the real and apparent incidence of rates, and that he had contrived, unintentionally, no doubt, altogether to misrepresent the reasons which actuated the Committee in making these recommendations. The Committee were of opinion that whereas, as a matter of fact, the real incidence of local taxation was partly upon the owner and partly upon the occupier, the occupier of average intelligence could not be got to understand this, and was continually under a certain sense of hardship. That sentiment was not justified by the Committee, but as it existed they thought it would be desirable to assimilate the law to the facts, and to divide the rates between occupier and owner in law, just as already the actual incidence of local taxation did fall partly on the owner and partly on the occupier. Then the hon. Member drew a distinction between land and building, and asked how the imposition of taxes at equal rates upon property so dissimilar could be defended. He would point out that the real incidence of taxation upon land and buildings was not the same, even at the present time. This was an exceedingly difficult and complicated subject, and the hon. Member had told them that under the present system they did not know what the incidence of taxation was. How, then, was he justified in saying that land and buildings were taxed at the same rate? He was prepared himself to say that a larger proportion of local taxation, in proportion to values, was at present laid upon land than was laid upon buildings. According to one argument which the hon. Member had put forward, it might be reasoned that because a town could not exist without water it was to the water companies alone that the increase in value in towns was to be attributed. Surely the hon. Member must see that such an argument could not be sustained, however ingenious it might sound when put in the plausible manner he always commanded. The reform advocated by the hon. Member was rejected by the Committee appointed to examine into the case. But the hon. Member who proposed the resolution was much more cautious. It was true that he said he had a proposal which would be fair and equitable where land was built upon, and would be a new source of income where it was not built upon; but he looked in vain for any such proposal in the Resolution. Under the present system the enhanced value of land was subject to direct assessment, and, so far as the Resolution went, any hon. Member who voted for it would be voting in favour of a system that already existed. It contained nothing to which anyone could take exception. But if he passed from the Resolution to the Speech of the hon. Member he admitted that, though the hon. Member did not bring forward any very definite scheme, it was possible to judge the general lines on which he wished to proceed. Apparently he would assess land or landed property not on its annual, but on its capital value, and would add to that proposal the separate assessment of the various interests concerned. But if the hon Member would proceed on those lines there were, it seemed to him, two objections which he had either not dealt with at all or very inadequately. In the first place, did he mean to alter the real as well as the apparent incidence of taxation, and did he propose that this change should be applied in the cases both of existing contracts and future contracts? If the hon.

Member sought to alter the present incidence of taxation and to apply the burden he shifted to existing contracts, he could only express the hope that the House would resist any such unfair proposal, for it was obviously and clearly unjust. The proposal to relieve the occupier at the expense of the landlord had assumed many forms. Taxation of ground rents was one of them, but to tax ground rents specially would be to tax them twice over. Another proposal was that an arbitrary portion of the rates should be thrown upon reversions, but the effect of that would be to tax, not annual value, but capital values. It would be extremely unwise for the House to adopt, after a discussion of only two or three hours, proposals that would lead to a complete revolution in the whole system of our local taxation. But the hon. Member for Hackney thought he had discovered a way out of the difficulty by suggesting the special taxation of ground values at a different rate from building values. The hon. Member had not told them whether he would apply that proposal to existing contracts or not; but, if so applied, and it altered the real incidence of taxation, it would be unfair. If it applied to future contracts it would not be fair, and he saw very grave practical objections to it. A great deal had been said about the question of justice to the occupier in this matter. Surely justice required that those should pay the rates who derived advantage from their expenditure; and no serious attempt had been made to show that the landlords derived any appreciable advantage from them. It was hardly fair to describe rates which were levied and expended for securing advantages to the ratepayers as a burden. The rates were paid for services rendered. He quite admitted that in the case of permanent improvements the ground landlord derived a certain advantage from the expenditure of rates for which he did not pay. But it was incumbent upon those who brought forward this motion to attempt at least some estimate of the amount of advantage so derived by the landlords in proportion to the rates. The Select Committee did endeavour to arrive at some conclusion on this subject. That conclusion was that, supposing all the burden was thrown upon the ground landlords that in this connection could be legitimately thrown upon them, it would not represent more than 2d. in the pound to the ratepayers. Therefore, the House would see that while considerations of abstract justice might recommend the throwing of this burden upon the ground landlord, the relief to the ratepayers would be so small and the inconvenience in many respects so great, that it really would not be worth while to make the change. There was a wide discrepancy between the grievance described by the hon. Member in his speech and that set forth in the Resolution. The hon. Member only referred to the enhancement of value due to the expenditure of rates, while the Resolution referred to enhanced value due to the increase of population, and the wealth and growth of towns—in other words, the whole of what was commonly known as unearned increment. If they were discussing the larger question, he must ask whether, if the community locally or generally was entitled to any increment of value that might accrue without exertion on the part of the owner, the converse proposition would also apply, and the owner would be compensated for any decrease that arose in the value of his property for which he was not responsible. It seemed to be universally assumed that land would always go up in value. As regards agricultural land they knew by painful experience that the reverse was the case; and he wished he had the confidence that some hon. Gentlemen possessed that urban land would always go up in value. Even supposing this country could count with confidence upon the indefinite increase of wealth and prosperity, was that true of particular localities? When trade left a town, the property in that town would probably depreciate, and that consideration alone was sufficient to prove that the hon. and learned Member for Hackney was wrong in ascribing the enhanced value to the expenditure of rates, for in a town where trade was leaving, the rates might actually be increased while the values were diminished. If the House was prepared to lay down the broad proposition that the increment in value arising from the increase of the wealth and prosperity of the locality or of the nation ought not to belong to the individual owner, but ought to go to the locality or the nation, then the converse proposition also was true, that decrement of value arising from corresponding causes should not fall upon the owner, but should be borne by the locality or the State as the case might be. And yet nobody could say that that was not the *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole case. The value depended upon the demand and supply—a proposition which was not likely to be disputed. Anyone who purchased land, and ultimately made a profit by doing so, was entitled to that profit, because he had shown greater foresight than other men who had had equal opportunities; and how were they going to distinguish between the increment which arose from causes beyond the human ken, and those which were the consequences of a development in a particular locality foreseen by a particular individual, who took advantage of his foresight and secured the enhanced value of the land? If land was certain to rise in value, why should not the State or Local Authorities purchase, and so secure it for themselves? If a community, whether local or national, was to get the advantage of the unearned increment it should be by purchase, and in no other way, because that was the only way in which the unearned increment could be fairly secured to the community without injustice to individuals. But very few Local Authorities would care to venture upon land speculation, and that, to his mind, showed that they could not count with safety upon this increased value, so that if any individual purchased land, surely he was entitled to all the advantages he could get, partly by reason of his greater foresight, and partly by his taking the risk of a fall in the value of the land. He thought that the new system of taxation which had been suggested was highly objectionable, and trusted that the House would not, after so short a discussion, indicate its willingness to change the existing system after a Select Committee had investigated the whole subject, and had arrived at a conclusion diametrically opposed to the object of the Resolution.

*Mr. WALTER HAZELL (Leicester), as a new Member, asked the indulgence of the House while he addressed it upon this difficult and complicated subject. That it was a difficult and complicated subject no one could deny, but they were there to solve important questions, however complicated they might be. If the proposal of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes had been acted upon, by which building land was to be rated upon its capital value, our towns would have had opportunities of growing in a way they had not had hitherto, and with many advantages to the poorest members of the community. The hon. Member for Central Leeds had pointed out how injustice might be done, but surely they might so arrange the tax that if the income rolled away the tax would be adjusted to the diminished value of the property. As an instance of the way in which people were benefited by the unearned increment, he might point out to the House that a friend of his had recently sold a house in London for £7,000, for which his grandfather had paid only £700. The same gentleman sold a property in the City for £20,000 for which his grandfather paid £1,200. He would venture to ask whether under the system these owners would pay 100th part of what they ought to pay. Might he remind the House of what happened at the great health resorts, where land which had been standing waste was sold at an enormous price because the growth of the population made such places great health centres. As a matter of fact, the landlords of the great towns were getting increased profits out of the difficulties of the country. When unfortunate farm labourers flocked to the towns, unable to gain work in the country, they increased the ground value, and, whether they would or no, they had to pay their share of the increased ground rents. Do what they might, the towns were growing in extent. There were tens of thousands of little children who had never seen the country, such was the growth of some of their large towns. He held that it would not be unfair to use the taxation of ground values for the purpose of making the tramways into the country free to the poorer classes. . Every kind of improvement, no matter what it was, all tended to the profit of the ground landlord. Were they rightly informed that in 1920 one of the ground landlords would be in receipt of £5,000,000 a year from London alone? If that was so, the time was coming when they would have to deal with the question in a serious and determined spirit.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) said the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow and the Motion which he had placed before the House were not dissimilar from those which he made in 1892. The Motion on that occasion, however, covered a wider ground. His hon. Friend then dealt with the whole subject, agricultural land as well as urban land, Imperial as well as local taxation. In the interval the present Government had met his views with respect to Imperial taxation, and by the Act passed last year had redressed inequalities in Imperial taxation as regarded land throughout the country. He thought therefore, his hon. Friend had done well on that occasion to confine himself to urban property instead of including agricultural land. Whatever might be said in favour of extending the motion to agricultural land, the present would not be an opportune time to do it, for nobody could doubt, looking at the recent depression of agriculture, that this would not be a proper occasion on which to deal with the taxation of agricultural property. The evidence laid before the Agricultural Commission, of which he was chairman, showed that the true economic rent had almost disappeared, and that the rents now paid throughout a great part of the country did not amount to more than the interest on the capital expended in the last 20 or 30 years by the landowners. None of these arguments applied to urban property. As to that, there could be no doubt that there had been a continuous increase in its value. The growth of the population, the competition for land, the competition for favourable sites, all had tended to the growing increase in the value of urban property; and the result was that, while the value of urban property had been constantly increasing in a large number of cases, owing to the terminable leases in their towns, the landlords did not bear any share in the taxation, although they derived great benefit from the increasing value. That he took to be, in the main, the grievance pointed out. Then, as to agricultural land and the rates, he must point out that it was now admitted that the rates fell on the owners of the land. Now, this was not the case in towns where the occupier of houses and buildings was unable to shift the burden of the rates upon the owner of the land. It was now admitted by everyone who had looked into the matter that a large proportion of the burdens of local taxation fell on the occupier, and could not be shifted by him on the owner of the houses or of the land. The increase in the burden of rates in recent years had been heavier, moreover, in the case of urban property than in the case of rural property. In rural property during the past 25 years there had been a decrease of rates rather than an increase. He found that the average rural rate in agricultural and rural districts during the last 25 years had decreased from 2s. 7d. in the pound to 2s. 4d. in the pound, while in London the rates had increased from 4s. to between 5s. and 6s. In other urban districts the increase had been in the some proportion. It could not be denied, therefore, that the question raised by his hon. Friend was a very serious matter in respect of the urban districts of the country. His hon. Friend had looked at the question from the point of view of Scotland, but the case of Scotland was not nearly so strong a case as that of England, and especially the case of London. In Scotland the great majority of local rates were divided between the owner and the occupier; in Scotland there was not the system of terminable building leases in vogue as was the case here. The land in Scotland was let on perpetual feu leases, which were more in the nature of perpetual rent-charges, and therefore did not raise the same grievance in the minds of the community as in the case of terminable leases in London and other large towns. It was therefore, in London that the House could find the best illustration of the effect of the present state of the law, and of the practice arising under terminable leases. He pointed out that the system of terminable building leases was almost universal in London. The great bulk of the houses had been built under that system; he believed that at least five-sixths of the whole of the houses and the buildings in London had been erected under terminable leases. The owners had, in these cases, contracted themselves out of the local rates. In leases from 60 to 90 years the owners were not subject to the increase of the local rates. Though there might be new rates not contemplated when the leases were entered upon, it was found that at the end of the lease the owner came into possession of the property not only improved in value by the buildings erected upon it, but by the great public improvements which had been created out of the taxation which had been imposed during the interval on the ratepayers generally, and to which the owners of the land had not contributed a penny. That was the main grievance which was considered to exist in the present state of the law. He reminded the House that in 1825 there were in London 200,000 houses. In the interval that number had been quadrupled; and all these houses had been erected under the system of terminable leases. There had been four principal increases of taxation during the interval in respect of new duties undertaken by local authorities. In the first place there was the police, a new duty undertaken in 1829, and which now imposed a tax of 6d. in the pound on the ratepayers. In 1865 the Metropolitan Board of Works was constituted, and the rate now imposed by its successor, the London County Council, amounted to 1s. 2d. in the pound. In 1867 the Metropolitan Asylums Board was constituted; and now a rate of 4d. in the pound was imposed on all ratepayers on that head. Finally, in 1871, the School Board was constituted with the expectation that the rate would not be a heavy one, but the rate was now 1s. 3d. in the pound. During the same interval the debt of London had increased from zero to £40,000,000; and the money necessary to redeem that debt was levied by contribution on the ratepayers, on the leaseholders and the occupiers of the land, to the exclusion of the owners; yet the owners at the termination of the leases would find that the debt had nearly been paid off, and that they have derived the full benefit of the improvements which had been effected by this great outlay.

The Equalisation Bill of last year had the effect of imposing upon the ratepayers of the wealthier parishes a rate for the purpose of relieving the poorer parishes. The City of London, under that Act, had to pay a rate of 5d. in the £, and St. George's, Hanover Square, a rate of 4d. in the £. That was a wholly unexpected charge, levied for the first time; but it fell entirely upon the occupier. No one who had looked into the question could deny the injustice of the present condition. It was a burden which ought to fall equally upon the owner, who received rent under a lease, and the occupier. Until he heard the speeches of the hon. Members for Leeds and Salford he thought that there was a general consensus of opinion as to this injustice.

MR. G. W. BALFOUR said, that he had admitted a theoretical injustice to a certain very small extent, amounting only to part of the sinking fund on loans raised for permanent improvements. That was the conclusion of the Committee which sat on this subject.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, that he had not misrepresented the hon. Member, who described the remedy suggested by the Committee of 1892 as of no great importance. The case had never been better stated than by the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, in 1871, when introducing the Local Government Bill of that year. The right hon. Gentleman said at that time:—

"The Government have become more and more convinced that both justice and public policy require that the owners shall pay a certain portion of the taxes. At present, through the nature of the contract made between the occupiers and the landlords, by which the former engage to pay the whole of the rates, any increased rate which is not foreseen by either party falls entirely on the tenants. This is a question more seriously affecting the towns than the country districts; but it is genefally inexpedient that the landlords should be allowed to contract with their tenants that the local authority should impose no taxation on them. With respect to Imperial taxation, such a practice is not permitted, for if it were legal to make contracts that the whole of the income-tax should be paid by the tenants, the House of Commons would be hampered in its legislation, knowing that in any increase in the income-tax the payment would fall, not on the landlords who ought to pay their fair proportion, but exclusively on the occupiers. The result of the present state of things has been that many great improvements in the metropolis, Liverpool, Manchester, and other large towns have been made during the last ten years exclusively at the cost of the occupiers without the landlords contributing a single shilling towards the expense. The Government have decided that such an anomalous state of things shall no longer exist; and a provision rendering void any engagements by which owners contract themselves out of local taxation is embodied in this Bill."

Again, in 1892, the right hon. Member for Midlothian, speaking on the Motion which had been referred to, said:—

"It appears to me beyond all doubt that under our present system ground rents enjoy undue exemption, and in the metropolis, in particular, the owners of property have long enjoyed, at the expense of the ratepayers, privileges which are really unjust. I do not now speak of the manner in which these difficulties should be dealt with, but undoubtedly this is a matter as to which the people of London do look to effect a material change and improvement in their condition, and as to which I think, on grounds of justice and high policy, it will be important to make a change."

MR. LEES KNOWLES: The right hon. Gentleman has ignored the Town Holdings Committee.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, that that Committee, by a party vote of nine to eight, drew up a Report which apparently ignored altogether the grievances which existed. He could not admit the authority of that Committee as of any great value. There was another test of public opinion in this matter, and that was the attitude of the Moderate party at the last County Council election. He had observed that the Moderate candidates had almost vied with the Progressives in describing the grievances which at present existed and in suggesting remedies. The programme of the Moderate Party contained reference to this question of ground-rents. The Moderates criticised the Progressive Party for their want of action in three years, and for having been unable to come to any agreement as to what should be done, and the Moderate Party pointed out that the reform of the existing system was a question not of phrases, but of equitable division of the burden. Lord Cadogan, now a Member of the Council, himself a ground landlord, a Member of the late Government, and eminently qualified to give an opinion, used these words in his Address to the electors of Chelsea:—

"With regard to the taxation of ground-values, the discussion of which has occupied so large a share of the time of the Council, I can only say that these ideas do not appear to me to be objectionable. I will approach their consideration without prejudice, and with a sincere desire to act with impartial justice and fairness to all."

So the House might conclude that the universal opinion of London was that there was a grievance for which a remedy ought to be found, and he hoped they might look forward to the Moderate Party on the London County Council, where they had considerable power, vieing with the Progressives in the endeavour to frame a satisfactory scheme. Certainly, in view of the general consensus of opinion, he should, without committing himself to any particular scheme or promising immediately on the part of the Government to introduce a Bill, heartily support the motion of the hon. Member, who had presented his case to the House with so much ability. But he must frankly admit that between the recognition of the grievance and the application of a remedy there was room for much difference of opinion. The subject was an extremely difficult one, and the consideration given to it did not point to any general concurrence of opinion as to what should be done. The London County Council had given a great deal of time to the thorough investigation of the subject, and he believed he was right in saying had not yet come to a final determination as to the remedy.

Mr. DALZIEL: They have suggested three modes of dealing with it.

*Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, that was so, but they had not been able to determine which was the best. He believed the general opinion was rather in the direction of the scheme of the hon. Member for South Hackney (Mr. Moulton). He had listened carefully to the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Provand), and noticed that he did not commit himself to any definite scheme. He indicated several methods by which his object could be effected, and, among others, he mentioned Municipal Death Duties, the rating of vacant land, the appropriation of some part of the unearned increment, and the separate assessment of ground value as distinct from building value, so ably advocated by the hon. Member for South Hackney, but he did not commit himself to any one scheme. He said that no doubt a method would be found, that the difficulties were not insuperable, and he appeared to think that the Government ought to undertake the duty of finding a remedy.

Mr. PROVAND: Hear, hear.

*Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, several other Members had spoken in support of the motion, and, with the exception of the hon. Member for South Hackney, who had a very definite scheme which he expounded with great ability, there was no common concurrence of opinion in favour of any definite plan. Under these circumstances he did not think it was incumbent upon him at the moment to determine what was the best mode of dealing with this difficult subject. All he could say was that he felt himself entirely in sympathy with the case the hon. Member had made out. He had presented a grievance in respect to the position of occupiers in urban districts, a real and substantial grievance, and for his own part he (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) would have great pleasure in conferring with hon. Members on the subject with a view to devising the best remedy. He could not commit the Government to any promise of immediate submission of legislative proposals, or to an obligation to discover a definite scheme in the matter. With regard to the Amendment which the hon. Member for Salford (Mr. Knowles) proposed to move, and which referred to the recommendations of the Committee of 1892, it was hardly necessary to say it stood self-condemned. The hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. G. Balfour) said these recommendations had no importance, and everybody who had listened to the Debate, or had studied the subject, must come to the conclusion that the remedy proposed in the Amendment was insufficient and inadequate. It could prove no settlement of the question, though he frankly admitted the Report of that Committee did decide one certain principle, which would be of value in the examination of the case. One principle of value presented in the Report was that in which the Committee recommended that in future contracts between land-owners and intending builders of houses, for the purpose of protecting owners from the payment of rates during leases, should be made void, and that owners of land should bear their proportion of taxation. He felt no doubt then that the House would reject the Amendment of the hon. Member for Salford, and would accept the original Motion of the hon. Member for Glasgow.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) said, that there was little time to discuss in detail the speech the right hon. Gentleman had made, but he would have time to make a few observations on the curious character of the speech. It was an extremely important subject that had been discussed, and it was not usual for a Member of the Government to heartily support an Amendment to the Government proposal to go into Committee of Supply unless he was prepared to deal in a specific way with the question before the House. Now, they had waited for this speech with interest, because the hon. Member who moved the Resolution said he looked forward to a declaration of the intention of the Government, and that was an important matter in the Debate, because no private Member could deal with the question. What had the House had from the right hon. Gentleman of the intentions of the Government? The right hon. Gentleman proposed to vote for a Resolution with regard to the terms of which he had said nothing whatever; and not a single phrase of it had passed his lips during his speech. But he had founded his support of the Resolution on what he called a consensus of opinion with regard to the existence of a grievance. But the last time the matter was seriously discussed by a Committee of the House, the Resolution of the Committee was in direct conflict with the conclusion the right hon. Gentleman had expressed. He was reminded in the course of his speech, while he was boasting so cheerfully of a universal consensus of opinion, that that Committee decided against him by a majority of nine to eight. He said that was a Party majority, and when it was against him he said it was a consensus of opinion on his own side. When any great measure was before the House, and the Government got its normal majority of 14, were they to say that was a consensus of opinion in their favour because it was a Party majority? To prove the consensus of opinion which had been described, the right hon. Gentleman quoted a speech made by his right hon. Friend the Member for St. George's in 1871—now 24 years ago. The right hon. Gentleman made a speech representing the policy then led by the right hon. Member for Midlothian, and he presumed he satisfied his colleagues and followers at that time that he was right. Why had they not done anything during the last 24 years? Had they really felt that there was the injustice they said, why had they not only failed to find a remedy, but when their representative spoke now he said his mind was not ready for any specific remedy at all? He thought the President of the Local Government Board distinguished between a grievance and an injustice. Grievance in the sense of complaint there undoubtedly was. A great number of persons complained that the result of the contracts they had entered into had been unsatisfactory and unpleasant for them. But that was an entirely different thing from injustice, and the whole of the first part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech sounded like an argument in favour of the legislative prohibition of long building leases; because he pointed out the mischief that arose in consequence. But surely the right hon. Gentleman did not think a large part of the small property in London was held directly from a ground landlord? In the larger majority of cases, with small property there was a leaseholder standing between the ground landlord and the tenant, and upon that leaseholder fell directly a great share of the burden of rates put on the occupier. Really the proposal upon the Paper was an almost meaningless proposal. The last few words were words of limitation. The hon. Member said no system of taxation (he, himself, supposed he meant no system of rating, because there was an essential difference) could be equitable unless it included the direct assessment of enhanced value of land due to the increase of population, of wealth, and the growth of towns. Why did he put in those last words? He agreed with him that there should be an assessment of value of land however enhanced, but if they were now to make an alteration which distributed between the occupier and the ground landlord the rating of London, they would not add a single shilling to the rating of London. At the present time £8,000,000 was raised, but it represented, as every Committee had recognised (and Lord Hobhouse and Lord Farrer among others) that the rating of a house was the rating of the building and the land. They could not be separated. It had been tried over and over again, and in the rating of property in London no attempt was made to do it. It was only when exceptional cases were dealt with, such as railway stations, sewerage works, or great public institutions that any attempt was made to separate the value of the land from the value of the building. He thought they were entitled to have from the Government some specific declarations in this matter. No proposition that could be agreed upon as tangible had been put forward, and he was surprised that the right hon. Gentleman had enthusiastically declared for a Resolution for which he was not prepared to advance arguments, and the existence of which upon the Notice Paper was hardly recognised in his speech.

Amendment agreed to.

PLUMBERS' REGISTRATION BILL.

The Adjourned Debate on the Motion for the Second Reading was resumed.

*MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.) in reply to inquiries as to the object of the Bill, said that it parcelled out the country into districts for the education and examination of plumbers, who would be granted certificates if they could succeed in passing a theoretical and practical examination. When these certificates were granted, men would not say that they understood plumbing when they really did not.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) said, the question of examining and giving certificates to plumbers was an extremely interesting one, particularly at that time, when so many householders were suffering from lack of water during frost, and subsequent flooding from burst pipes. But there were some facts in connection with the Bill which he could explain, and which were absolutely unique. The Bill had been read a second time and sent to a Grand Committee, and he had been expecting to hear some explanation of the course taken by that Committee.

*MR. LEES KNOWLES said, the Committee adjourned the consideration of the Bill for the attendance of a representative of a Government Department, but he did not attend; consequently, without advice and assistance, the Committee were unable to proceed with the Bill. The Bill was strongly supported by the Local Government Board.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, if that were so, the House ought to hear it from a Minister. Why did not the Government endorse the statement that had been made?

MR. LEES KNOWLES: I am not one of their supporters.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, it appeared the Bill had been referred by the Committee to the Local Government Board, and by the Local Government Board to the Committee. Could the hon. Member assure them that, if plumbers were registered, householders would be saved from recent and present experiences? If plumbers were to be registered, why not blacksmiths and farriers? Why not shoemakers, barristers, and attorneys? If they were, it had done them very little good. But why did no one explain all this to the Grand Committee?

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

On the Motion for the Adjournment of the House,

MR. SIDNEY HERBERT (Croydon) asked whether the House was to understand that the Navy Estimates would be the first Order on Monday.

THE PATRONAGE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. THOMAS ELLIS): Yes, Sir.

*In answer to Mr. R. W. HANBURY (Preston), MR. THOMAS ELLIS said, he could not say whether the Army Estimates would be taken on Thursday.

The House Adjourned at Five minutes past Twelve o'clock till Monday next at three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 11th March 1895.

SAT FIRST.

Lord Basing—after the death of his father.

WILD BIRDS PROTECTION ACT, 1880, AMENDMENT BILL.—[H.L.]

House in Committee (according to Order).

Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

SEED POTATOES (IRELAND) BILL.

On the Motion to go into Committee,

Lord RIBBLESDALE said, he wished to reply to one or two points raised on the Bill the previous week by Lord Ashbourne, which he was not able at the time to give specific answers upon. Lord Ashbourne asked what remuneration it was proposed to give the inspectors under the Act; how many it was contemplated to appoint; and whether there would be any objection to lay on the Table or publish in the *Dublin Gazette* or the Press the names and previous occupations of the inspectors? Fifteen inspectors had actually been appointed, and it was not expected that any further appointments would be necessary. It would be inconvenient to publish the names, &c., of the inspectors, and it was not deemed necessary to do so. He might also point out that the late Government in 1890 did not publish the names of the inspectors then appointed by gazetting or otherwise. The remuneration of the inspectors would be three guineas a day, which included hotel expenses; if Sundays were charged for, the charge was not to exceed one guinea. The inspectors were to be reimbursed for the actual expense of locomotion, including first class railway fare.

Passed through Committee, and reported without Amendments.

ALTERATION OF SCOTTISH BOUNDARIES.

***Lord BALFOUR** rose—

> "To call attention to the Orders issued by the Secretary for Scotland regarding the alterations of boundaries in the case of the burgh of Stirling and the parish of St. Ninians; and in the case of the burgh of Ayr, and the parish of St. Quivox; and to ask what instructions were issued to the sheriffs who held the inquiries; and whether the Secretary for Scotland will have any objection to making public the reports he received in these cases?"

He said he would state briefly why it was necessary to raise the question. With regard to the burgh of Stirling and the parish of St. Ninians, he knew the whole circumstances of those places intimately, and he considered he was not going too far when he said that there was no necessity whatever for the change which had been made, or was proposed to be made, by the Order issued by the Secretary for Scotland. In the case of the burgh of Stirling, there was absolutely no allegation whatever that any benefit could possibly arise, either with regard to the administration of the Poor Law relief or facilitating the work of the Parish Council in the future. Every authority in the district had objected to the alteration of the boundaries. The Parochial Board and the Kirk Session had objected, and petitions had been signed by over 500 ratepayers in the district against the change proposed. Amongst the anomalies which would be created, if the Order was carried into effect, was, that the Church and churchyard of the parish of St. Ninians would cease to be in the civil parish, and would be transferred to the burgh of Stirling. Many of the inhabitants of the parish believed that their claim to certain local endowments would be seriously prejudiced by the alteration, and a very strong feeling had been aroused in respect to the rate. The Boundary Commission, which was appointed under the Local Government Act of 1889, was asked to make this very alteration, and at that time it was refused. He thought it was a little hard that, without their knowing the reason which had actuated the Secretary for Scotland, so radical and violent a change had been made as to take one-sixth of the valuation from St. Ninians and add it to the burgh of Stirling. The point he wished to put was, if the Order were in accordance with the report of the Sheriff

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

who held the inquiry, surely it would strengthen their hands to publish the report and if it were not in accordance with the report; it appeared to him that that Enquiry was a delusion and a sham. The main question with regard to the burgh of Ayr was very much the same. He did not desire to call in question the alteration of the boundaries of the burgh, but what his friends in the locality did not understand was, why the landward parishes—the parish of Ayr and the parish of St. Quivox—had been united. They were separated throughout their whole length by the river Ayr, and there was no community of feeling between the people of the two landward parishes. It would cause the greatest confusion in educational matters. The county clerk of Ayr had written to him to the effect that in the case of Ayr landward, as defined for School Board purposes, the School Board of that part of the parish, and of the *quoad sacra* parish of Alloway, were joined together by the Order so far as it related to School Board purposes could not easily be understood.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Lord TWEEDMOUTH), in reply, said, that the instructions to the Sheriffs who held the inquiries were purely general. They were requested to hold a local inquiry on terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act into the various applications, and to report upon their general expediency or otherwise, the adjustment of the financial details being reserved for subsequent arrangement if necessary. There was no special instruction to the Sheriffs at all. The Secretary for Scotland did not see his way to publish the reports of the Sheriffs. The Secretary for Scotland was himself responsible for the decision as to the division or junction of these parishes. The reports received from the various Sheriffs and other gentlemen who had conducted inquiries, were confidential documents submitted for the information of the Secretary for Scotland, and had in no case been communicated to the public. The course adopted in these particular cases was in accordance with that which had been followed in other cases where applications had been made to place the whole of a burgh within a single parish. In the case of Stirling, the 40 days' notice within which representations might be received, expired on 6th instant, and representations from St. Ninians Parochial Board, and from certain ratepayers, were receiving careful consideration. In the case of Ayr (where the Poor Rate was 5d. in Ayr parish, 1s. in Newton-on-Ayr parish, and 1s. 5d. in St. Quivox parish), the 40 days had not yet expired, and certain representations as to the educational aspect of the proposed Order were now under the consideration of the Secretary for Scotland, in consultation with the Law Officers. The reason for joining St. Ninians with Stirling was that at this moment, for all purposes except Poor Law relief, St. Ninians was part of the burgh of Stirling. Stirling supplied it with water, gas, and police, and one street ran down two portions of the burgh and a portion of the one side of the street was in Stirling and a portion in St. Ninians. He could not agree with the noble Lord as to the universality of opinion in favour of St. Ninians remaining separate. On the contrary, he should like to quote the following extract from a letter from the county clerk—

> "To those who are on the spot, and really know how matters stand, nothing would be more ridiculously wide of the mark than the statement that the Order is regarded by anybody as injurious to their interests and those of the poor. The village part of the parish of St. Ninians is already part and parcel of Stirling for every purpose, save only that of Poor Law relief, and it is absurd to suppose that anyone can believe that to make Poor Law relief follow every other phase of civic life will prove injurious. So far as the village population is concerned, the real feeling is one of indifference whether the village is merged in Stirling or not. In the landward part of the parish, on the other hand, the feeling in favour of the Order is practically unanimous. There is entire absence of community of interest between the two parts of the parish, and now that elective Parish Councils are about to be established, the landward people desire the management of their own affairs. I am convinced that there is not a case in Scotland in which an Amalgamation Order would be more beneficial.

The Secretary for Scotland had other information to the same effect, and he (Lord Tweedmouth) was bound to say he thought the proper course had been followed.

DISTRIBUTION OF PARISH COUNCILLORS, SCOTLAND.

*LORD BALFOUR asked, why the Local Government Board for Scotland altered the distribution of Parish Councillors agreed upon between the parishes of South Queensferry and Dalmeny; and whether the Board will make public any representations they received, and upon which they acted, either in that case or in the case of the parish of Bathgate. He said that these two questions had reference to the action of the Local Government Board for Scotland and not that of the Secretary for Scotland. The direction given in the Act of last year was that regard should be had to—

> "the powers and duties of the Parish Council under this Act, and to the population and special wants and circumstances of the parish."

His case was, that in regard to the parishes of Dalmeny and Queensferry, the Local Government Board for Scotland had disobeyed that instruction, and had had regard to nothing but population. The two parishes were amalgamated by order of the Secretary for Scotland, in spite of strong objections urged by the County Council and by the parish of Dalmeny. A conference took place between the County Council and the Town Council of Queensferry, and, at the suggestion of the Town Council, the number and allocation of Parish Councillors was fixed at nine; and they were allocated—four to Queensferry and five to Dalmeny. That was actually proposed by the Town Clerk of Queensferry, and was agreed to unanimously by all concerned; and it was a reasonable arrangement, because the population of the borough was only about 150 in excess of the landward district, the valuation of the parish was four and a half times as much as the town, and the area 5,890 acres as compared with about 100 acres. On the agreement being reported to the Local Government Board, they wrote that they were unable to approve of the allocation—

> "in respect that the larger proportion of Councillors is assigned to the landward part of the parish, which has a smaller population than the burghal area."

The Local Government Board themselves confessed in that letter that they had regard to nothing but population, whereas they were enjoined by the Act to have regard to the special wants and circumstances of the parish. Surely, in a case of that kind, when four and a half times the amount of money would be raised from one part of the parish as compared with the other, and when the populations were so nearly equal, it was only fair that the landward portion should have the deciding voice. It was a fact that, out of every pound which would be raised for Parish Council purposes, the landward part would have to find 16s. 3d., and the borough of Queensferry only 3s. 9d. Yet the latter was to have the preponderance of the voting power, which was not only unjust but was absolutely in the teeth of the plain directions put in the Act of Parliament. In the case of Bathgate the Local Government Board had gone wrong in the same way. There was, in the first instance, an agreement between the boroughs of Bathgate and Armadale, and the County Council of Linglithgow. The population of Bathgate was a little over 5,000; the valuation was £14,000; and the number of electors 790. The population of Armadale was 3,190; the valuation was £5,500, and the number of electors 491. The landward part of the parish had a population of under 3,000; the valuation was nearly £26,000; and the number of electors 415. It was proposed, and at first agreed to, that there should be seven Councillors for Bathgate, three for Armadale, and five for the landward part of the parish. This agreement was afterwards departed from by Armadale, which asked for four Councillors; and the Local Government Board, instead of abiding by an arrangement they had assented to, without any reference to the County Council, issued an order giving Bathgate eight Councillors, Armadale four, and five to the landward part of the parish; and he was informed that the Board absolutely refused to listen to any representation on the subject by the County Council. This was not only a flagrant disregard of the provisions of the Act, but it was contrary to the Circular which the Local Government Board had issued. According to that Circular, there ought to have been only 15 Councillors for the parish; and the Board made it 17 without making any communication with any local authority. It seemed to him that the Local Government Board had not acted quite fairly in this matter, and he should be glad if the noble Lord, who would answer for the Government, could see his way to make public the grounds on which the Local

Government Board had come to their decision.

Lord TWEEDMOUTH said, he did not anticipate that the noble Lord would go fully into the case of Bathgate, and he was not prepared to enter in detail into the points that had been raised with regard to that parish. As to the cases of Queensferry and Dalmeny the Local Government Board had endeavoured to meet the wishes of all parties concerning the distribution of Parish Councillors as between the burghal and the landward parts of the new parish. The Local Government Board had laid down the principle that where the population of one portion of a parish considerably exceeded the population of another portion, they would not give a greater number of councillors to the smaller portion than was given to the larger portion. In this case the population of Queensferry was 200 greater than that of Dalmeny. Therefore the Local Government Board objected to give five councillors to Dalmeny and four to Queensferry. A proposition had now been made by the Town Clerk of Queensferry that there should be six burghal and five landward members — that Queensferry should have six and Dalmeny five. The Secretary for Scotland was willing to accept that proposal as a compromise. The whole matter was still under negotiation.

***Lord BALFOUR**: How is that a compromise?

Lord TWEEDMOUTH said, he understood the principal reason why the landward part of the parish objected to the number was that they thought four, as an even number, was inconvenient, and if they were given five members that would satisfy them. It was not so much a question of having a majority as of having a sufficient number of councillors. The proposal mentioned had been made, and it was the desire of the Local Government Board to meet the views of the various parishes on the adjustment of these matters.

***Lord BALFOUR** asked whether there was any hope of getting from the Local Government Board or the Secretary for Scotland their idea of what they were intended to consider, under the terms of the Act, as the special wants and circumstances of a parish? In what circumstances could a clear case be made out for equality, or for a majority, on one side or the other than had been made out in the cases submitted?

Lord TWEEDMOUTH said, he had told the noble Lord that the Local Government Board had laid down as one principle on which to act that the parish with the largest population should have a majority of councillors.

LARCENY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Herschell), in moving that this Bill be read a second time, said that it had already been before their Lordships' House. The object of it was to enable a person who knowingly received stolen goods in this country to be convicted of crime, although the goods had been stolen in foreign parts.

Bill read 2^a.

PERJURY BILL.

The LORD CHANCELLOR moved the Second Reading of this Bill, the object of which, he said, was to consolidate and amend the law of perjury. This Bill was also before their Lordships last Session, when it was referred by the Standing Committee to a Sub-committee, and the form in which it was finally settled by the Sub-committee was that in which it now came before the House.

Bill read 2^a.

House adjourned at Five minutes to Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 11th March 1895.

The House met at five minutes past Three of the Clock.

QUESTIONS.

THE DEFENCE OF LONDON.

***Colonel HOWARD VINCENT** (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the

Secretary of State for War, if any mobilisation has ever been attempted of the land forces deemed available for the defence of London, Regular, Reserve, Auxiliary, Horse, Transport, and Guns; and, in the contrary case, whether he can see his way to ascertain by experimental mobilisation, as in the case of the Navy, if the plans existing on paper are effective, and if in any particular they are susceptible of improvement?

*The FINANCIAL SECRETARY of the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Woodall, Hanley): No mobilisation of the land forces designated for the defence of London has taken place. It is in contemplation that a small mixed force of all arms shall be mobilised this year in the neighbourhood of London, and it is anticipated that useful experience will result from this experiment.

*Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: Will the Reserve men, the Militia, and the Volunteers be brought in, and will the attendance of the Reservists be compulsory or voluntary?

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): Will the men in the Home District be brought in?

*Mr. WOODALL: It will be a small experimental force from the Home District.

Colonel LOCKWOOD: Will the entire force in the Home District be mobilised?

Mr. WOODALL: No; I have not said that.

IRISH MAGISTRATES.

Mr. W. E. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, what steps, if any, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland proposes to take in the cases of Mr. Fitzsimons and Mr. Tierney recently appointed to the Commission of the Peace for County Cavan?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Lord Chancellor states that he has been informed that neither of the gentlemen named in the question took any part in the proceedings at the Petty Sessions held on the 7th inst., to which I referred in my answer to the hon. Gentleman's previous question of last Tuesday. The Lord Chancellor has made inquiries, and does not find that either of the gentlemen took part in any illegality on the occasion in respect of which the prosecutions of the 7th inst. arose, and he does not propose to take any further action in the matter.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Is the Lord Chancellor aware that one of these gentlemen presided on several occasions when complaints were made of persons living in the neighbourhood being boycotted?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I cannot answer that, and I do not think that the hon. Member can expect me to do so. The Lord Chancellor assures me that from all the inquiries which he has made he is satisfied that the persons on the Commission of the Peace are persons of respectability, and are fit for the post.

POOR LAW VOTE IN IRELAND.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, (1) whether he is aware that the Clerk of Strabane Union has rejected the claim to a Poor Law Vote, lodged on behalf of Mrs. Mary Browne, a freeholder, valued at £55, because the value of her interest, which it is impossible to ascertain or accurately estimate, cannot be filled in, although in previous years the Clerk accepted such claims; and that the same official rejected a form of claim lodged on behalf of a Mr. Toorish, on the ground that the column headed "Nature of Ratepayer's Interest" was filled up by the words "Immediate Lessor; (2) does this official act on legal advice, or on instructions from the Local Government Board, or on his own view of the Poor Law Acts; (3) what is the statute authorising such action by him; (4) is there any appeal or means of challenging his decision; and (5) as keen interest is taken in these contests locally, will the Local Government Board take any notice of the matter, or lay down any rule governing the reception or rejection of claims to vote?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Returning Officer reports that Mrs. Browne's claim was rejected because the nature of her interest in the property was not properly described, and that Mr. Toorish's claim was rejected because the form did not contain a statement as to whether any rent was payable in respect of the property, these particulars being requisite for the purpose of compliance with the statute (Section 15 of the Poor Law Act of 1862). The Returning Officer further reports that he never accepted claims in previous years unless properly filled up. In reply to paragraphs 2 and 3, it is the duty of the Returning Officer to conduct the election in accordance with the various statutes bearing on the subject and the general regulations of the Local Government Board, and, as required by Section 88 of the Poor Relief Act of 1838, to make a Return to that Board of the persons elected Guardians "according to the best of his judgment and ability." In reply to paragraph 4, under Section 23 of the Poor Relief Act of 1843, disputed questions may be determined by the Local Government Board. In reply to paragraph 5, the Local Government Board have no authority to interfere with the Returning Officer in the making of his Return. When the Return is made, however, they have power to set it aside and order a new election if they think fit.

RABIES IN DOGS.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he can state the number of cases of rabies (dogs) in 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, and 1894?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HERBERT GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): The number of cases of rabies in dogs during the six years in question has been 312, 129, 79, 38, 93, and 248. I may add that, practically, the whole increase in 1894 as compared with 1893 has been in the two counties of the West Riding of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and that we have constantly been in communication with the Local Authorities in those counties as to the measures to be taken to bring about a more satisfactory position as regards this dangerous disease.

MR. A. B. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): Is it not a fact that only parts of Lancashire are under the proclamation as to the Muzzling Order, and that in places the dogs on one-half of a street may be muzzled, while on the other they are allowed to be running about freely?

*MR. GARDNER: I do not think that that is quite the case. What the right hon. Gentleman says is, however, partly right, for some portions of Lancashire are not under the Muzzling Order.

COUNTY CESS IN GALWAY.

MR. P. J. FOLEY (Galway, Connemara): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether (1) he is aware that, on the 9th, 10th, and 11th of January last, the county cess collector for the Barony of Ballinahinch, County Galway, Mr. Martin Mongan, with his bailiffs and two policemen, came into the district of the electoral division of Sellerna, in the union of Clifden, to levy the current spring cess by distress and sale; that, although he had previously issued notices calling the people to pay him at his office, and many went there a distance of nine miles, he did not attend; that, on the said day, he refused to take the cess in more than 30 cases unless an additional sum of 2s. was paid in each case, the average amount in each case being about 4s.; that one man, whose cess was only 1s. 6d., was charged 2s. costs, and another was charged 4s., the amount of the cess being about 13s.; that those who had gone to Clifden to pay were charged as well as those who did not go; and that, in a few cases, where costs were at first refused, he made seizures and enforced payment of these costs; (2) with regard to these cases, is it lawful for a county cess collector to levy cess by distress and sale without previously summoning the parties and obtaining a warrant; (3) is any charge over 1s. in the £ on the amount of the cess illegal; (4) what steps did the Government take, before affording a police party to Mongan, to ascertain that his proceedings were lawful; (5) and is the cess collector bound to call at every ratepayer's house for the cess?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the facts are as stated in paragraph 1. In reply to paragraph 2, the collector can levy cess by distress without previously summoning the parties. In reply to paragraph 3, any charge over 1s. in the £1 for the expense of distraining when a distress is made is illegal. In reply to paragraph 4, on each of the occasions referred to, the collector had in his possession a warrant authorising him to collect cess. No special police force was afforded, but two constables were present when the cess was collected. In reply to paragraph 5, the collector cannot levy a distress unless the ratepayer has refused to pay.

FIFE COUNTY BOUNDARIES.

MR. H. T. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has had under consideration a petition to alter the boundaries of the jurisdiction of the Sheriff Courts in the County of Fife, and the objections of the Magistrates and Council of Cupar Fife thereto; and if he can announce the conclusion at which he has arrived in the matter?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Sheriff of the County has held a full inquiry and heard all parties interested in this Petition. After careful consideration of his Report, and of the representations in favour of the Petition and against it, I have decided to make no change in the existing boundaries.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy District): I wish to ask whether the fact was taken into consideration that a strong representation was made by the District Council on the subject?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: That fact was considered, but notwithstanding, I came to the conclusion I have stated.

MR. DALZIEL: I beg to give notice that I shall call attention to this matter.

CARRYING ARMS IN IRELAND.

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. P. M. Casey, of Crusheen, County Clare, applied four times to Mr. Brady, R.M., for a licence to carry a gun to protect his crops without receiving any reply to his applications; and, whether in view of the fact that Mr. Casey's application is supported by all the Magistrates in his district, he will order the licence to be granted to him?

MR. J. MORLEY: The resident Magistrate informs me that application has been made to him by Mr. Casey for a licence to keep firearms, but that he has felt himself unable to grant the application, and has personally informed Casey to this effect. The discretion of granting or withholding an arms licence is vested by the law in the resident Maaistrate, and I am bound to state as a result of the inquiries which I myself have made in this case that the licensing officer exercised a reasonable discretion in refusing to issue a licence to Mr. Casey.

MR. W. REDMOND: Is it not a fact that all the Magistrates in the locality recommended the licence?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not quite sure of that.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. W. REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the distress existing in the Tulla union, County Clare; and whether he will consider the advisability of spending some of the grant for relief of distress in Ireland in the Tulla district?

*MR. J. MORLEY: The Inspector of the Local Government Board has recently visited this union, but so far as can be ascertained there is no abnormal distress at present such as would render it necessary to open relief works.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he has received from the Guardians of the Castlerea Union a copy of a Resolution, unanimously adopted by them on the 2nd instant (several clergymen attending the meeting), in which they urgently press before the Local Government Board and the Chief Secretary the necessity for public works in the district, particularly in the parishes of Kiltullagh and Loughglynn, which are very congested, and in which abundance of work can be provided by roadmaking, and by the drainage of the Lung river and tributaries and the tributaries of the Suck; and also calling upon the Congested Districts Board to immediately set on foot in the two congested districts works of public utility, as they have done absolutely nothing in that direction up to the present; (2) whether he has had placed before him a scheme for a line of railway running through this district from Castlerea to Ballaghaderreen, on which it is proposed to expend £80,000, provided the sanction of the Government can be obtained to a maximum guarantee of

£600 per annum; (3) whether it has been represented to him that only the Treasury consent is necessary to have this important work commenced immediately; and (4) whether, in view of the necessity for providing employment during the summer, he will recommend the Treasury to consent to the proposal with as little delay as possible?

*MR. J. MORLEY: I have been furnished with a copy of the Resolution referred to in the first part of the question. The Local Government Board state that, owing to the severe winter and the partial failure of the potato crop, a number of small landholders and labourers are in straitened circumstances, but with a continuance of the present mild weather the outlook should much improve. The Guardians have been authorised to relax the restrictions on outdoor relief, and the Local Government Board are of opinion that cases of destitution can, for the present at all events, be met by this extension of the Poor Law. The Board's Inspector will again visit this union shortly. With regard to the scheme for a line of railway between the places mentioned, the Irish Government has received from the Treasury a communication stating that their powers to contribute to baronial guarantees, under the Tramways Act of 1883, are exhausted, and the promoters of the scheme have been so informed.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he has received at the Local Government Board a Memorial from the inhabitants of Clondavaddog and Killygarvan, in the Milford union, praying for assistance towards the making of a road across Knockalla Mountain; (2) whether he is aware that the late Chief Secretary admitted in 1891 the need of the road, but stated that it could not be undertaken as a relief work, as destitution did not exist in the district; and that the Congested Districts Board has promised to contribute to the expense; and, (3) whether in view of his own statement as to the condition of Glenvar and the neighbourhood, he will consider the propriety of furnishing the balance of the expense as a measure of relief?

*MR. J. MORLEY: I have received the Memorial referred to in the first paragraph. The road in question would, I understand, be a very useful one, and the Congested Districts Board have agreed to contribute to the expense of making it, if undertaken by the county; but, so far as the Local Government Board, are aware, there is no unusual distress in this part of the Milford union such as to render the opening of relief works necessary. It has been decided that a number of fishermen in Glenvar may be offered employment on the relief works to be opened in the Termon district, but this is an exceptional measure, and arises from the losses sustained by these men during the recent storms.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: May I ask whether the Local Government Board reported a serious distress among the purely agricultural population?

*MR. J. MORLEY: Of course I am informed there is distress, but not such as to justify interference beyond the ordinary Poor Law.

MR. D. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether his attention has been directed to the Memorial presented to the Kenmore Board of Guardians by the inhabitants of the townlands of Staigue and Liss, electoral division of Castle Cove, which was forwarded to the Local Government Board, stating the necessity that exists for some employment in this district, to enable the people to maintain themselves and their families; (2) whether he is aware that a road in the townland of Liss, commenced by the late Government as a relief work, is still unfinished, and, whether, having regard to the distress in the locality, he will direct immediate steps to be taken to have this work completed; and (3) whether he is aware that the Congested Districts Board are giving no employment in this neighbourhood at present, the pier at West Cove being completed last summer?

*MR. J. MORLEY: Representations have been made alleging the existence of distress in parts of the Kenmare Union, but the Local Government Board, upon the information at present before them, see no sufficient ground for anticipating the occurrence of destitution of such a character as to justify the opening of relief works. In some of the poorer districts about Sneem the partial failure of the potato crop renders it necessary for some of the smaller landholders to seek relief, and should this be so the Guardians will be authorised to extend outdoor relief to these classes. I understand that at Derrynane, in the vicinity of West Cove, works are at present being carried out by the Congested Districts Board.

DELIVERY OF LETTERS IN LLANELIDAN, DENBIGH.

Mr. J. H. ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General—(1) whether he will state whether he has received a Petition from the inhabitants of the parish of Llanelidan, in the county of Denbigh, in reference to the delivery of letters in the parish; (2) whether he is aware there is no daily delivery in a large portion of the parish, and that this results in serious inconvenience to the locality in question; and (3) whether he will direct an inquiry into the circumstances of the case?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Arnold Morley, Nottingham, E.): Inquiry is being made on this subject, and I hope very shortly to be able to arrive at a decision upon it.

Sir J. KINLOCH (Perth, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he has observed that, notwithstanding the great depression of agriculture in the United Kingdom, butter, cheese, and eggs to the value of nearly £23,000,000 sterling were imported last year from abroad, the imports of butter having increased from £11,985,190 in 1892, to £13,470,419 in 1894, the increase on butter from Denmark alone for the same period amounting to £1,000,000; whether he has considered any means of encouraging British agriculturists so to increase the production of home-made butter as to render unnecessary the large importation from foreign countries; whether the difficulty of distribution could be overcome by enabling farmers, under a cheap rate of postage, to send butter direct by parcel post to the customer; and, whether he will arrange with the Postmaster General to facilitate the forwarding of the butter under a special rate of 1d. per 17 ounces, so as to allow for the packing of one pound parcels?

*Mr. HERBERT GARDNER: It is the case, as my hon. Friend observes, that the value of the butter, cheese, and eggs imported into the United Kingdom last year was very nearly £23,000,000, and that as regards butter there was an increase of about £1,500,000 in 1894 as compared with 1892, nearly £1,000,000 being attributable to Denmark. I should be very glad indeed to do anything in my power to encourage the supply of these articles by home-producers, and I am glad to observe from reports which I have received that the largely increased attention now given to technical instruction in dairying is resulting in a distinct improvement of quality. The information we have been able to issue as to the systems in force in Denmark and elsewhere, has also, I trust, been of service to those concerned. With regard to the suggestion that special parcel-post rates should be allowed in the case of butter, I would say that the subject is one upon which both my predecessor and myself have been in communication with the Postmaster General, but there are serious difficulties—both practical and financial—in the way of any arrangement of the kind, as will be seen from the reply given by my right hon. Friend to the question of my hon. Friend, the Member for Leicester, on the 28th February.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can give the quantities of foreign oats and foreign barley imported into Ireland in 1892, 1893, and 1894; whether there has been an increase or decrease in the imports of those articles since the Budget Statement of last year; and, what were the average market prices of Irish-grown barley and of oats respectively in the months of May, August, and November, in 1893 and in 1894?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. J. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): The quantities of oats and barley imported into Ireland direct from foreign countries in the last three years have been as follows:—

Year.	Oats, cwts.	Barley, cwts.
1892	15,105	796,156
1893	7,020	694,603
1894	23,100	1,334,349

The quantities of foreign oats and barley into that country (imported direct) in the 10 months ended the 28th February, 1895, as compared with the quantities imported in the 10 months ended the 28th February, 1894, have been as follows :—

	Oats, cwts.	Barley, cwts.
Ten months to February, 1894	7,020	741,916
Ten months to February, 1895	41,100	1,131,647

There has, consequently, been an increase in the imports of those articles into Ireland, since the Budget statement of last year, in the case of oats of 34,080 cwts., and in the case of barley of 389,731 cwts. With regard to the average market prices of Irish grain, barley and oats, the following have been the prices at the Dublin Corn Exchange per barrel of 16 stone as regards barley, and per barrel of 14 stone as regards oats :—

	Barley.		Oats.	
	1893.	1894.	1893.	1894.
May	11.9	14.9	12.6	12.0
August ...	none returned	14.3	13.7	11.4
November	14.9	14.0	10.11	11.6

Mr. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade how many bushels of maize, barley, and oats, respectively, were imported into the United Kingdom last year ; and what is the annual cost to the country for making these Returns ?

Mr. BRYCE : The December number of the Board of Trade Returns (page 16) shows the quantities in hundredweights of maize, barley, and oats, which were imported into the United Kingdom in 1894. Taking the weights per bushel of the several sorts of grain named to be 60 lbs. to the bushel of maize, 39 lbs. to the bushel of oats, and 50 lbs. to the bushel of barley, the following would be, approximately, the quantities expressed in bushels of maize, barley, and oats imported in 1894, viz. :—Maize, 66,014,747 bushels ; barley, 69,987,420 bushels ; oats, 43,017,229 bushels. If the hon. Member refers to the expense incurred in preparing the Returns of the articles mentioned in the Question, it does not seem possible to separate the cost incurred in respect thereof from that of preparing the Returns of Imports generally.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT, 1889.

Mr. J. A. M. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that frequent complaints are made of the working of the Weights and Measures Act of 1889 ; and whether, in particular, he is aware that complaints are made of the want of uniformity of procedure on the part of the Inspectors appointed under the Act by the local authorities of the country ; and, if so, whether he proposes any amendment of the law ?

Mr. J. BRYCE : Yes, Sir, I am aware that a certain amount of discontent is felt at the want of uniformity of procedure in the administration of the Weights and Measures Acts, but some variation appears to me to be inseparable from the system of entrusting the administration of such measures to local authorities, and although certain inconveniences do no doubt exist which the supervision of a central authority might remove, they seem to me to be outweighed by the advantages of that local discretion and control which Parliament has more than once approved.

INDIAN MILITARY PENSIONS.

General GOLDSWORTHY : On behalf of the hon. Member for Wandsworth (Mr. H. Kimber) I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, notwithstanding Rule 17 of the Indian Pensions Regulations, the service out of India of Sub-Lieutenants of the Line, when not antedated, is not allowed to reckon as service for pension in the Indian Staff Corps ; whether certain officers of the Marine Light Infantry who failed for the same entrance examination for the Army that the Sub-Lieutenants of the Line passed, and who were subsequently brought into the Indian Staff Corps, thereby superseding the sub-lieutenants, are permitted in all cases to reckon as service for pension two years of their service out of India ; and whether he will recommend to the Indian Government that the service out of India of Sub-Lieutenants of the Line should in like manner be permitted to count for pension, in conformity with the abovementioned rule ?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, in the absence of Mr.

H. H. Fowler) : Owing to the fact that under the War Office rules service for pension reckons only from date of first permanent commission, the facts are as stated in the hon. Member's question. It is not thought desirable to establish a different rule for Indian pensions.

SECOND-CLASS BATTLESHIPS.

Mr. A. B. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state the number of first and second class battleships now being built or preparing to be built by England, France, and Russia respectively, not included in Parliamentary Return (Navies, England and other Countries) No. 465, of December, 1883.

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee) : Since the date of the Return of December, 1893, seven battleships have been commenced in this country, while in France the *Henri IV.* has been given up, and another battleship will be laid down in 1895; and in Russia, the *Paris* will be proceeded with.

MIXED MARRIAGES IN MALTA.

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give any information as to the time when the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on the question of Mixed Marriages in Malta is likely to be given, the argument having been concluded several months since?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) : I am afraid I cannot give my hon. Friend any information as to the time when the Lords of the Judicial Committee will report to Her Majesty in this matter.

LABOURERS AT WOOLWICH ARSENAL.

Mr. J. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he recently received a deputation from the labourers employed in Woolwich Arsenal, asking whether the Government intended to pay labourers 6d. per hour; whether he is aware that this demand has been three times endorsed by the Trades Union Congress; and whether any reply has been sent to the deputation?

*The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. W. Woodall, Staffordshire, Hanley) : Yes, Sir, a deputation has recently been received from the labourers employed in Woolwich Arsenal, asking, among other things, for a further increase to the minimum rate of wages. Their representation will receive very careful consideration.

ACCIDENTS IN INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT.

Mr. J. KEIR HARDIE : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will cause to be published monthly in the *Labour Gazette*, in addition to the number of accidents in a locality, the causes thereof?

Mr. J. BRYCE : The *Labour Gazette* publishes monthly summaries of certain classes of accidents in (1) factories and workshops, (2) mines, (3) on railways, (4) at sea, (5) in employments within the scope of the Notices of Accidents Act, 1894. The classification of causes is by no means an easy matter, and the space available in the *Gazette* is very limited; but if the hon. Member will state more specifically what changes he desires to be made in the published Returns of any of the above classes of accidents, the suggestions will be carefully considered.

COALING FACILITIES AT GIBRALTAR.

Mr. C. BILL (Staffordshire, Leek) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is the fact that in the summer of 1894 the Chamber of Commerce at Gibraltar was officially informed that the Government had decided on the construction of a mercantile mole for that harbour; whether it has been decided that the expense of the construction of this mole is to be provided out of the revenues of the Colony, or by a grant from the Imperial Government; and whether the works in connection with it will be commenced in the present year?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON : The Chamber of Commerce was informed that the Secretary of State would be prepared to give his best consideration to any well-devised scheme for improving the facilities for the coaling of merchant vessels at Gibraltar. A scheme prepared by the Admiralty Director of Works has since been received and has been referred to the Governor for report, and until that report has been received and considered no final decision can be arrived at. I regret that I am unable at present to indicate the date at which any works will be commenced. No proposal that the expense of such a work should be paid from Imperial funds has been received by the Secretary of State.

TORPEDO CATCHERS.

Mr. C. T. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty (1) if he can state how many and which of the torpedo catchers, built or being built, are constructed with tubular boilers; (2) whether any and which are fitted with copper tubes; (3) whether those with copper, have proved not only a failure but dangerous; and (4) will he, for the information of Members, have drawings of and a description of the *Belleville* and other types of tubular boilers placed in the Tea Room?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: (1) Of the 42 torpedo-boat destroyers completed and building, all except six are and will be fitted with water-tube boilers. (2) The boilers of nine of these ships were fitted with copper tubes throughout by the contractors, who were responsible for the design and preferred to use that material. (3) In three of the last named, on the Contractor's preliminary trials, failure of the copper tubes occurred in positions most exposed to the fire, and in one case was attended with fatal results. It was consequently decided to avoid further risk by substituting — entirely in some of these vessels, and to a large extent in others—steel tubes for copper. (4) With regard to the last paragraph of the question, arrangements can be made to meet the wishes of the hon. Member.

THE STEAMSHIP PORTUGUESE PRINCE.

Mr. J. H. WILSON (Middlesbrough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been directed to the written statement of the crew of the steamship *Portuguese Prince*, now trading between Rio Santos and Baki, and if he is aware that the crew of the said vessel states that her engines and boilers are in a defective and unseaworthy condition, and were so when she last left the United Kingdom; if his attention has been called to the treatment which the boatswain of the said vessel received at the hands of the captain in consequence of his protestation that the engines and boilers were defective; if he is also aware that some of the crew of this vessel died of cholera or malarial fever; if his attention has also been directed to the statement made by the crew with reference to the drinking water, which was pumped into the tanks direct from the River Plate; and what steps he will take to cause a thorough investigation of the charges made by the crew of the said vessel?

Mr. BRYCE: The only information which the Board of Trade have received is contained in a letter received from the hon. Member on the 4th inst. Upon the receipt of that letter, Her Majesty's Consuls at Rio de Janeiro and Santos were requested to report fully upon all the matters complained of; and I have given instructions that when the vessel returns to this country, the fact shall be at once reported, so that if necessary further inquiry may be made. I have this moment received a telegram stating that the owners of the vessel do not admit the facts to be as alleged in the question, and that they are forwarding a statement to me on the subject.

THE PORT OF SANTOS.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state how many seamen have died at the Port of Santos on board of British vessels during the year 1894, and how many British vessels are now lying at that port without crews, with only a portion of their crews, and the number and rating of all of such crews still remaining alive; whether he can state what remedy, if any, the relatives of deceased seamen may have against owners of vessels for compensation in cases where men have been taken to Santos against their will and desire, and died there; and if he will appoint a Select Committee of the House to inquire into the alleged serious loss of life on board British vessels at Santos during the past five years?

Mr. BRYCE: I am unable to give the information asked for in the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question, but I will endeavour to obtain it from Her Majesty's Consul at Santos. Whether the relatives of deceased seamen taken to Santos against their will have any remedy against the shipowner, is a legal question on which it is not for me to express an opinion. The regrettable loss of life on British vessels at Santos does not seem to be one calling for the appointment of a Select Committee of the House, but the Board of Trade have issued repeated warnings as to the unhealthy condition of the port, and notices are posted up at the Mercantile Marine Offices where seamen sign articles.

POLICE IN COUNTY CORK.

CAPTAIN DONELLAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been drawn to a resolution, passed by the Middleton Board of Guardians, on the 2nd instant, protesting against the establishment of a police barrack at Glenagare, county Cork, as unnecessary and unjust to the ratepayers, the locality being most peaceable and but a short distance from the town of Castlemartyr; and, whether, in deference to the strong public feeling thus expressed, he will advise the police authorities to reconsider the matter and abandon the project?

MR. J. MORLEY: My attention has been drawn to the resolution in question. No police barrack has been established at the place referred to; all that was done was to locate two constables in the house of a particular individual for the purposes of special protection, and the employment of these constables on this duty will entail no extra charge whatever to the ratepayers.

SWAZILAND.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, (1) whether, by the Convention of 18th December, 1894, with the Transvaal, Her Majesty's Government have agreed that the Government of the South African Republic shall have and be secured in all rights and powers of protection, legislation, jurisdiction, and administration over Swaziland and the inhabitants thereof; (2) whether the Swazi Government and people were parties to that Convention, or were invited to take part in it; and (3), whether he will explain by what right, legal or moral, the British Government can thus dispose of the independence of a free people?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: As regards the first question, the hon. Member will find the terms of the Convention of 1894 in the new blue book already circulated. The answer to the second is in the negative. As regards the third question, I endeavoured, in the Debate on the Address, to explain to the House the position of affairs and how it had arisen, and, for answer, I must, without admitting the assumption contained in the question, refer the hon. Gentleman to my speech on that occasion.

MR. T. H. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.) asked if there was any information that the Boer troops were assembled on the borders of Swaziland?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON thought there were troops there under General Joubert.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT asked, whether the Government had given their consent to the military occupation of Swaziland by the Boers or the armed invasion of the country by the Boers.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: That question has not arisen ("Oh.").

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN IRELAND.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he is aware that Peter M'Brearty filled a representation form under the Labourers Acts, and attended the Inspector's inquiry at Strabane, and that the Inspector condemned the man's house as unfit for habitation; (2) whether he is aware that the house has since been nearly destroyed by a storm; and (3) whether the Inspector will be authorised to make provision for the case?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board inform me that the labourer named in the question had been offered by his landlord a good slated cottage, with half an acre of ground, and that the case did not, therefore, appear to be one in which a cottage should be erected at the expense of the ratepayers. The statement in the second paragraph is substantially correct, though I understand that the man is now residing in a comfortable house which has been given to him by his landlord.

THE LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881.

MR. J. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury—(1) whether he is aware that the Board of Works, having refused a loan under the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, to John Lynch, of Deffier, South Leitrim, have retained a sum of 10s. which he sent them as a preliminary fee; and (2) whether, as the legal tribunals have, in the case of money-lenders, discountenanced the practice of retaining fees for preliminary expenses where no loan is granted, he will direct that this sum of 10s. be refunded to John Lynch, the applicant for the loan?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The statement in the first paragraph of the question is correct. When an applicant first applies for a loan he is sent a copy of the regulations under which the loans are issued, one of which requires him, in forwarding his memorial, "to transmit therewith 10s. to cover expenses in the event of the loan not being proceeded with." This charge never covers more than half the actual expenses incurred in making the preliminary inquiries; and, under the circumstances, I do not think it would be right to refund the amount.

ROAD CONTRACTS IN IRELAND.

MR. J. TULLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, at the last meeting of the grand jury for the Spring Assizes for the county of Longford, it was resolved, instead of continuing the old system of paying road contractors where the county surveyor had to give certificates for payment for work three months before the work was done, that in future all road contracts should run either from 1st May or 1st November, so that contractors who had a half-year's work done in November would be paid at the Spring Assizes, and contractors who had a half-year's work done in May would be paid at the Summer Assizes; and whether, seeing that this system had been successfully carried out in the County Kerry for the last 22 years, he is prepared to recommend the general adoption of this system by grand juries in Ireland, so as to obviate not only the necessity for any contentious legislation, but the inconvenience caused by the recent decision of the Court of Appeal in the case of M'Intosh *v.* The Derry Grand Jury?

MR. J. MORLEY: It appears that the magistrates and cesspayers in the County Lonford adopted resolutions to the effect that road maintenance contracts should run from the 1st of May and the 1st of November, and that the contracts should provide for a half-year's work and a half-year's pay. The general adoption of this form of contract seems most useful, and calculated to obviate, so far as future contracts are concerned, the difficulties that have been raised. The Executive have no power to constrain grand juries to adopt this form of contract; but I have no doubt of their desire to meet the difficulty in question, and relieve the road contractors from the hardship of deferred payment. I have been unable to ascertain that the Longford grand jury passed any resolution on this subject.

COUNTY COUNCIL LOANS.

MR W. JACKS (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware of the inconvenience to the County Councils being allowed under the Act to borrow only upon half the rates; and if he can see his way to do anything to remedy this?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: In reply to the hon. Member, the Government intend to insert a Clause dealing with the point referred to in their County Councils Bill.

CONCILIATION (TRADE DISPUTES) BILL.

MR. G. W. WOLFF (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the date of the Second Reading of the Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill has yet been fixed; and whether a day is to be given for its discussion, or whether the Bill is to be read after 12 o'clock?

MR. BRYCE: I am not yet able to say when the Second Reading of this Bill can be taken. I think that some time ought to be allowed for its discussion.

BALLINCOLLIG BARRACKS, COUNTY CORK.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether Ballincollig Barracks, County Cork, are at present incapable of accommodating the cavalry regiment usually there stationed, numbers of soldiers being obliged to get quarters in the town; and whether, under the alleged circumstances, the enlargement of the barracks in question, affording the necessary housing for soldiers, might be soon undertaken?

*MR. W. WOODALL: There is not accommodation in Ballincollig Barracks for a whole regiment of cavalry, and a portion of it is therefore stationed at Cork. The only men quartered in Ballincollig town are 17 married men, for whom quarters are not available in the barracks. There is no present intention of enlarging the barracks; but some of the houses on the ground lately held by Mr. Magner will be used for the married soldiers' quarters.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that a number of families are now threatened with eviction from the Government farm at Ballincollig, and that the heads of these families are *employés* in the Ballincollig Powder Mills; and whether, his attention having been directed to the impossibility of obtaining local house accommodation for these families, a reconsideration of the question might be favourably undertaken?

*MR. W. WOODALL: I am sorry that inconvenience should be caused to the six families referred to by the resumption of this War Department land for necessary military purposes. When the land was taken over in December from the tenant under whom they were subtenants, they were reinstated as caretakers on the understanding that the houses would be required to be given up on the 25th March for military purposes.

COUNTY WEXFORD TELEGRAPHIC FACILITIES.

MR. P. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether a telegraphic office is to be opened at Kilmore Quay; and whether he will inquire if a telegraph office at Kilmore Village would meet the requirements of the public much better?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: Very careful inquiries were recently made, and I came to the conclusion that the requirements of the public in the South-east of the County of Wexford would best be met by telegraph offices in Bridgeton, Broadway, Killinick, and Kilmore Quay. I can hold out no hope that an office can be granted to Kilmore Village; but I need scarcely say that I shall be glad to consider the representations in the letter which the hon. Member has forwarded to me.

THE SOLWAY AND TWEED FISHERIES.

MR. W. J. MAXWELL (Dumfriesshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland—(1) whether, under the reference to the Royal Commission on the Solway and Tweed Fisheries, the Commissioners will inquire into the laws applying to the white fisheries, as well as into those relating to the salmon fisheries of the Solway Firth; (2) whether they will inquire into the salmon and freshwater fisheries of Scotch rivers (including the Esk) comprised in the operation of the Solway Act, together with the laws applying to the said fisheries; (3) whether, in view of the repeal of the Solway Act, 1804, by 24 and 25 Vic., c. 109, so far as it applies to England, that portion of the Solway not now comprised in the operation of the Solway Act will come within the purview of their inquiry; and (4) whether, in terms of the reference, the Commissioners will be entitled to inquire into the validity of the titles by which the fixed engines in the Solway are now held?

MR. BRYCE: The reference to the Royal Commission on the Solway and Tweed Fisheries will include all the fisheries of the Solway Firth, but had not been intended to include the salmon and freshwater fisheries of the rivers which flow into the Firth. The Solway Act of 1804 is still in force, except so far as it applies to salmon in English waters, and its area, which includes the whole of the sea within a line drawn from the southernmost point of Cumberland to the Mull of Galloway, will be within the reference. As regards the fourth paragraph, I apprehend that questions of the title to private property such as would in ordinary course come before a Court of Law will hardly be matter for the inquiry of the Commissioners.

Mr. W. J. MAXWELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman not extend the scope of the inquiry so as to include the whole question affecting fishing in the Solway?

Mr. BRYCE: I will consider the question, but I think, as at present advised, the inquiry will be found to be very large.

Mr. W. J. MAXWELL: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether he has considered the Order of the Board of Trade for the creation of the Cumberland Sea Fisheries District; whether the Cumberland District Committee will have power to make bylaws regulating the white fisheries in the upper part of the Solway Firth where the fishing is mainly carried on by Scotch fishermen; and, whether, pending the inquiry by the Royal Commission into the Solway Fisheries, he will decline to create an administrative body with power to regulate the fisheries in that part of the Solway regarding which the inquiry is to be made?

Mr. BRYCE: As regards the Order for the creation of the Cumberland Sea Fisheries District, the draft was communicated to my right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland in the first instance. The Order does not apply to any Scottish waters. I am not disposed to deprive the county of Cumberland of advantages which they desire, and which have been obtained upon nearly the entire coasts of England and Wales; but the application and working of the Sea Fisheries Regulation Acts in the area of the Solway will be within the reference to the Commission, and if, in consequence of any recommendation of the Commissioners, Legislation should ensue, any necessary adaptation of those Acts can be provided.

THE CROFTERS ACT.

Sir D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, if the announcement which he has made that the Government intend to postpone the Introduction of the Bill to amend the Crofters Act until after the issue of the Report of the Deer Forests Commission, indicates an intention to include in the proposed Bill provisions for the distribution of any lands reported to be available for the extension of existing crofter holdings and the creation of new holdings?

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: I cannot give any information to my hon. Friend as to the contents of the proposed measure until I introduce it to the House.

Sir D. H. MACFARLANE asked, whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce the Bill of last year, or whether the House was to wait for Legislation until the issue of the Report. Was there the smallest prospect of any effective Legislation this year?

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: I think we are more likely to carry a Crofters Bill through the House if it embraces all the principal subjects of grievance. I am quite sure that a Crofters Bill would not be considered by the House until the Commission which has sat so long has reported.

Dr. MACGREGOR (Inverness, E.): Are the Government in earnest at all in this matter? Or are they not endeavouring to humbug, not only their supporters, but this House?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Dr. MACGREGOR: On the point of order I insist upon an answer, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not entitled to insist on an answer.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1894

Sir R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will be good enough to arrange for the publication, in some convenient form, of a Copy of all orders, general orders, rules and regulations issued by the Board in connection with the Local Government Act, 1894, with the view of assisting district and parish councils and parish meetings in the orderly execution of their various and complicated duties?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Bradford, Central): Several of the general orders and circulars issued by the Local Government Board under the Local Government Act, 1894, were only of a temporary character; but I think it desirable that those of a more permanent kind should be laid before Parliament, and I am considering which of them should be thus dealt with.

CHAIR OF AGRICULTURE AT QUEEN'S COLLEGE, GALWAY.

Mr. P. J. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will favourably consider the question of establishing a Chair of Agriculture in the Queen's College, Galway?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The charter granted to this college in 1849 provided for a chair of agriculture. Subsequently, however, the Irish Government came to the conclusion that the three colleges of Galway, Cork, and Belfast would be benefited by the augmentation of the stipends of the professors at the cost of the abolition of certain of the then existing chairs, and it was decided to abolish the chair of agriculture as of subordinate importance to the colleges regarded as educational establishments. This change was practically carried into effect by the new charters of 1863, which provided that the next vacancies in that chair should not be filled. A re-establishment of the chair of agriculture would probably necessitate a fresh allocation of the endowment and reduction of the stipends of the other chairs, and I am not aware of the existence of any general desire for the re-establishment of the chair at Galway College.

ANTHRAX IN NORTH DEVON.

Mr. A. BILLSON (Devon, Barnstaple): It beg leave to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture (1) if his attention has been called to a serious outbreak of anthrax in North Devon, whereby one farmer has lost upwards of 60 animals during the last few days; (2) if the regulations of the Board provide for any compensation in cases of anthrax; (3) and whether he will consider the desirability of issuing fresh regulations by the Board with reference to this disease?

*Mr. HERBERT GARDNER: My attention has been called to the recent serious outbreak of anthrax near Ilfracombe, and I have been in communication with the local authority on the subject. The Regulations of the Board provide for the payment of compensation where animals are slaughtered by a Local Authority with a view to prevent the spreading of disease, but in anthrax this course is not often desirable. With reference to the third paragraph of my hon. Friend's question, I may say that a new and revised Order on the subject of anthrax was issued a few days ago, to come into force on the 1st prox. I shall be very glad to supply a copy to my hon. Friend.

ATTACK ON BRITISH GUIANA POLICE.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether officers and members of the British Guiana police last winter were attacked by Venezuelan armed forces, seized, and carried into Venezuelan territory from British territory; whether he can state what has happened to these British subjects, and when they were enabled to return to their homes; whether the Venezuelan Government have offered any explanation; and what steps the Government propose to take to arrange the questions in dispute which give rise to such international complications?

Sir EDWARD GREY: Some officers and members of the British police force were seized on the right bank of the river Cuyuni and taken to a Venezuelan station at El Dorado, early in January. They were released on the 20th of January, and all of them have now returned to Demerara. The Government of Venezuela have summoned the General Commissioner on the Cuyuni and the Military Commander to Caracas to give explanations, and have appointed a special commission to investigate the matter. Her Majesty's Government will wait for a reasonable time to hear what is the result of the inquiry instituted by the Government of Venezuela before they determine what reparation should be required.

THE BALTIC AND NORTH SEA CANAL.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can now state what arrangements are in contemplation as to the presence of British ships of war at the approaching opening of the Baltic and North Sea canal?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The Channel Squadron is to attend.

PRISON WARDER'S ALLOWANCE.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether the superannuation allowance of ex-Warder Lewis, of Carlisle, is included amongst the sundry small pensions for which a Supplementary Vote under Class 6 is now asked?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: No, Sir; it is not.

THE SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENT PROSECUTION.

MR. W. P. BYLES (York, W. R., Shipley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his attention has been drawn to recent prosecutions undertaken by a common informer under the Act of Parliament, 21 George III., c. 49, of certain gentlemen in Leeds engaged in promoting the instruction of the people; whether he has observed the summing up of Mr. Justice Mathew, before whom these actions were tried, and also the rider of the jury that the aforesaid Act ought to be repealed; and, whether he can hold out any hope that the Government would assist in passing a Bill which proposed to modify or repeal the before-named statute, or in any other way to prevent further similar proceedings against the promoters of lectures and music on Sundays?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I agree with my hon. Friend that it ought not to be possible to institute proceedings of this kind in such a case. In the instance to which he refers, the action happily miscarried. The Government cannot under take to legislate on the subject, but they will look favourably on any well considered proposal for rendering the law more rational and less open to abuse.

MR. BYLES asked whether, if a Bill dealing with the question came down from the House of Lords, it would be looked on favourably by Government?

MR. ASQUITH: The Bill would not be unfavourably looked upon because it came from another place; but I cannot promise that facilities would be given to it.

DRAWING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

MR. J. H. JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, if certificates of qualification to earn grants on the teaching of drawing in elementary schools, may be granted to teachers who do not hold the elementary drawing certificate, but who satisfy the conditions of Form No. 1,294 of the Department of Science and Art, and who have been recognised teachers in elementary schools within the meaning of Section 3 of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, and of Paragraph 31 of the Code of 1894, for seven years prior to the 1st September 1891, though not actually certificated for the whole seven years, and although their periods of service as recognised teachers may not have been continuous?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W. R. Rotherham): The answer to this question is in the affirmative. I am much obliged to the hon. Member for calling my attention to the matter.

TELEGRAPH SERVICE PROMOTION.

MR. F. A O'KEEFFE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the rule of the Postal Telegraph Service, that second-class officers, transferred from one office to another, are placed at the bottom of their class in the office to which they are transferred, has always been rigidly enforced, and if he would explain why it has been departed from in the case of the second-class officer recently transferred from Killarney to Limerick, he having been placed over the heads of the second-class staff, by being promoted to a first-class appointment, and how the plea of exchange is sustained, seeing that both officers held different positions in their respective offices; whether it is a fact that, owing to this system, only one local second-class officer has been promoted in the Limerick Telegraph Department within the past six years; and, will he cause further inquiry to be made into the whole treatment meted out to the second-class staff at Limerick?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: Yes, Sir; it is the general practice when an officer is transferred from one office to another that he enters the class to which he is transferred at the bottom. As I informed the hon. Member, the exchange of officers between Limerick and Killarney was made in the interests of the Service. If the staff at either office has anything to complain of, and will bring forward the subject of their complaint through the prescribed official channel, I will undertake that it shall be carefully inquired into and considered, and if the hon. Member cares to call at the General Post Office I will arrange that an officer of the Department shall put him in possession of all the facts.

DISMISSAL OF SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Major RASCH: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he has considered the position of teachers, who are now liable to dismissal at the will of the managers of schools; and, whether he will grant them some security of tenure by permitting an appeal to the Department, without which no dismissal should be valid?

Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND: This question has been frequently under my consideration, and I should be very glad if I could do something to mitigate the hardships which arise in connection with this matter. It is very difficult to discover a satisfactory remedy, though the Department has given much attention to the subject. I may, however, say that I do not think a general power of appeal to the Department would work well. I do not intend to lose sight of the matter.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN WEST HAM.

Mr. J. KEIR HARDIE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has given his sanction to the proposal made to him by a deputation from the Guardians of the Poor of the West Ham Union, which waited on him on 18th February with reference to an offer of the guardians to contribute a sum of £500 to a similar sum of £500 to be subscribed by the county borough of West Ham, and a like offer affecting the Leyton Urban District Council, the money so subscribed to be used on relief works for the unemployed?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: A deputation of the Guardians of the Poor of West Ham was received by me with reference to the proposals mentioned. I informed them that I was advised that they were not legally empowered to make the contributions suggested, and that I had no power to authorise them to do so.

ROYAL ENGINEER INSPECTION DIVISION, WOOLWICH.

Mr. J. KEIR HARDIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether an order has recently been issued to the staff of the Royal Engineer Inspection Division at Woolwich, informing them that the whole of their time is at the disposal of the Government, and prohibiting them from taking any position as a member of a public body or otherwise; whether one member of the staff was dismissed for refusing to accept these conditions; and whether it is intended to enforce the terms of the notice?

***Mr. WOODALL**: Public servants are allowed to accept positions on public bodies provided they do not interfere with the performance of their official duties; but it is a fundamental principle that the state has a primary claim upon the whole of the time of its *employés;* and, in cases where unusual pressure occurs or where the special work of an individual has fallen in arrear, overtime is liable to be called for. An order reminding the officials in the Engineer section of the Inspection Department of their obligations was recently issued, and it is intended to enforce it. A writer who declined to abide by the order had his services dispensed with after receiving the usual notice.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: Am I to understand the answer to mean that no person employed by this Department may accept office in any public body meeting in the evening?

***Mr. WOODALL**: No; the hon. Member is not to understand that. On the contrary, the order, which I believe is equally applicable to all Departments of the State, gives specific permission to public servants to serve on Parish Councils or any public body of which the meetings are held outside the time of their official duties, provided, of course, that, if their services are required by the State, that will be the first claim.

Dr. TANNER: May I ask whether, in view of the fact that all the men of the Royal Engineer Inspection Department have been tradesmen before entering that branch of the Service, it is advisable that these men should be allowed to take up jobs and to enter into competition with the local tradesmen at a time of great destitution and want?

*Mr. WOODALL thought the question did not arise out of the answers he had given, and asked for notice.

WAGES OF POST OFFICE SERVANTS.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he can say how many postal *employés* in London over the age of 18 years receive a weekly wage of 24s. and under; whether these are established men; what are their hours of labour; at what hour do they begin duty, and when is the day's work over; and whether he proposes to abolish or modify the early morning and evening attendance at present performed by the sorters in the London district?

*MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: There are 9,646 established officers on the postal side in London—sorters, porters, and postmen—paid upon scales, with a minimum of 18s. or 20s. a week, rising by annual increments in the case of postmen (in the City) to 34s. a week, and in the case of sorters to 56s. a week. Of these at the present time 4,937 received 24s. a week or less. The large proportion of officers on the lower steps of the scale is mainly due to the rapid growth of the Service and to the large additions which have been made in recent years to restrict the hours of duty to an eight-hour day and to prevent, as far as possible, overtime being worked by the regular force. There are in addition nearly 1,000 unestablished officers doing a full day's work, who receive in most cases 18s. a week. Of these a quarter are ineligible, by reason of age, for appointment. The remainder—about 750—have been taken on within the last 18 months, in order to reduce overtime amongst the established staff. These 750 persons are all eligible for appointment, being, as a rule, between the ages of 18 and 20, and steps are taken from time to time, as opportunities occur, to place them on the establishment as sorters or postmen. All these persons work for eight hours daily (Sundays excepted). But the hours of attendance vary in each case in accordance with the requirements of the work. In addition to these full-time men, there is a body of about 2,400 auxiliary postmen, who work from two to six hours a day, and are paid at a rate varying, according to the hours at which the duty is performed, from 6d. to 9d. an hour. The hon. Member must recollect that the established officers, in addition to their pay, derive great advantages from receiving full pay during the annual leave, and during their absence when ill, as well as free medical attendance. The postmen receive also uniform and an allowance for boots. These advantages are estimated to be, in the case of postmen, equivalent to an additional wage of not much less than 5s. a week. The hon. Member should also recollect that all established officers have the prospective advantage of pensions on retirement, while every well-conducted postman can look forward to good-conduct stripes, each of which carries an allowance of 1s. a week. I have given careful consideration to the question whether it is practicable in any way to modify the early morning and late evening attendances at present required from 29 per cent. of the sorters at the General Post Office, and I have invited the men themselves to suggest how this can be done without any unreasonable addition to the cost. But the difficulties of doing so appear so great that I cannot hold out much hope that these duties will be altogether abolished. Many of the men, I am informed, prefer these split duties to continuous duties at inconvenient hours, such as all-night duties.

OBSTRUCTING A FEMALE FACTORY INSPECTOR.

MR. J. KEIR-HARDIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the sentence passed on an Ashton draper who was found guilty of obstructing Miss Anderson, an inspector under the Factory and Workshops Act, in the performance of her duties, and ordered to pay the costs of the prosecution; and whether he proposes taking any action in the matter?

MR. ASQUITH: My attention has been called to this case. The magistrates convicted the offender, and I have no power to increase the penalty which in the exercise of their discretion they thought fit to impose. I shall take care that this workshop is kept under observation, and that the law is strictly enforced there, so far as the Inspectors of Factories can enforce it.

THE NIGER COMPANY AND DRINK TRAFFIC.

MR. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if his attention has been called to a communication to the *Liverpool Daily Post*, from Mr. G. A. Moore, managing director of the Oil Rivers Trading and Exploration Company, stating that the Niger Company pay their Native labourers' wages in spirits, in face of one of their own laws forbidding it; that Kroomen are also paid partly in spirits; that the Niger Company also pays a great amount of its treaty subsidies in spirits, and that practically no restrictions whatever are placed on the sale of gin and other spirits by the company's agents; and what action does he propose to take in the matter?

SIR E. GREY: I am informed that if proof can be adduced of any agent having, in defiance of the regulations, paid wages in spirits, such agent will be dismissed. This applies equally to Kroomen. When treaties were originally made the natives insisted, according to the then existing practice, on receiving their subsidies partly in spirits, but three years ago instructions were given that in all such cases the natives were to be induced to accept other goods in place of spirits. In nine-tenths of the company's territory the sale or barter of spirits is absolutely forbidden, in the remainder the sale is restricted by a system of licences.

BRITISH SPHERE OF INFLUENCE IN THE NILE VALLEY.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether there is any foundation for the recent statements of M. De Brazza, French Commissary General for the Congo, that the recent treaty between France and Belgium secures to France access to the Valley of the Nile, and will enable the French to settle the Egyptian Question in a way consistent with French interests; and of M. Déloncle to the effect that the same treaty practically cuts across the famous English route from the Cape to Cairo; and whether, in view of the importance to Egypt and to British influence there of keeping the whole Nile waterway free from any Foreign occupation or control, Her Majesty's Government will now clearly state that the whole Nile waterway is within the British sphere, and that no Foreign occupation of the Nile will be permitted by Great Britain?

SIR E. GREY: I cannot discuss the personal opinions of different individuals as to the future effect of the recent agreement between France and Belgium. The relation of that agreement to British interests will continue to receive the careful attention of Her Majesty's Government. The extent of the British sphere of influence in the Nile Valley is defined by the agreements made with Germany and Italy in 1890, and I cannot add to the definitions given there.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Can the hon. Baronet state whether this definition includes within the British sphere the whole Nile water-way?

SIR E. GREY: No; but the Egyptian and British spheres together do cover the whole Nile waterway.

WAR OFFICE—MEDICAL DIVISION.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is now in a position to state the result of the inquiries he promised during the Debate on the Medical Vote last year to make into the distribution of the duties in the Medical Division of the War Office?

*MR. W. WOODALL: The Secretary of State made full inquiry into the distribution of work in the Medical Division of the War Office, and satisfied himself that the professional officers and the civilians were appropriately employed on professional and clerical work respectively. Medical officers who are necessarily changed frequently could not properly discharge the duties which devolve upon the principal civilian clerk.

BERRIEW SCHOOL SCHEME.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether a scheme has been made, under the Welsh Intermediate Act, in respect of Berriew School; and whether, as a petition was duly presented against the scheme, in accordance with Section 15 of the Endowed Schools Act, 1873, he will explain why the scheme has not been laid upon the table of the House?

Mr. ACLAND: In October last, 12 of the 20 petitioners wrote, desiring that their names might be withdrawn from the petition. In these circumstances it was not held that there was any such petition before the Department as would justify them in laying the scheme before Parliament, and it was accordingly submitted to Her Majesty for approval. The course adopted was in accordance with precedent in cases where a petition to lay a scheme before Parliament had been withdrawn. The same course was pursued in the case of the second scheme for Dauntsey's Charity under the late Government. In fact, the Department have always hitherto proceeded on the assumption that no other course was open to them. The procedure was considered so much a matter of course that it was not brought under my notice.

Viscount CRANBORNE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the action of the Department in not laying the Scheme on the Table is contrary to the Act of Parliament?

Mr. ACLAND: Not in the view of the legal advisers of the Department, either now or in the course of any former Ministry.

Viscount CRANBORNE: When the right hon. Gentleman speaks of "legal advisers," does he mean the Law Officers of the Crown or the legal advisers of the Department?

Mr. ACLAND: The legal advisers of the Department.

SALE OF SPIRITS AT GIBRALTAR.

Mr. W. S. CAINE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, if it is the case that proprietors or managers of coal hulks at Gibraltar are allowed to purchase spirits in bond, and to resell them by retail, without paying duty, to firemen and sailors of steamers lying alongside their hulks; and if he is aware that constant complaints have been made by captains of steamers to the Governor without effect?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: We have no information on the subject, but inquiry will be made.

THE FIRE IN TRINIDAD.

Sir G. BADEN POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give any further information as to the disastrous fire reported to have taken place in Port of Spain, the capital of the Colony of Trinidad?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: We have as yet received no details in regard to the very lamentable fire at Port of Spain of which we heard with great regret. I fear that the damage is very great. It is estimated at £500,000.

PARISH COUNCILLORS.

Mr. WALTER H. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether a member of a Parish Council becomes disqualified for continuing to hold his office as councillor by taking an allotment which is under the management of the Parish Council?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. T. Reid, Dumfries Burghs): In answer to the hon. Member's question, I have to say, that in my opinion, a member of a Parish Council does not become disqualified for continuing in office by reason of his taking an allotment. If the hon. Member desires I will give my reasons.

Mr. W. H. LONG: I beg to ask the Attorney General if a member of a Parish Council can be a recipient of any charitable or other funds distributed by the Council?

Sir R. T. REID said, whether or not a member of a Parish Council can be a recipient of a charitable or other parish fund distributed by the Council, must depend wholly on whether he is a trustee of the charity either in his individual capacity or as member of the Parish Council.

Mr. W. H. LONG put the case of a recipient from a fund for which trustees were appointed by the Parish Council of which he was a member, and in the proceedings of which he took a personal part.

Sir R. T. REID: I will endeavour to answer without notice. I think in that case, the persons appointed being trustees and not the Council; therefore, the person securing benefit from the charity would not be disqualified, because he is not trustee.

THE BUDGET.

Mr. T. R. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.) asked the Chancellor of the

Exchequer when he proposed to introduce the Budget.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The financial statement for the year will not be made until after the Easter Holidays.

MR. J. H. DALZIEL: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if, and when, a Vote on Account will be taken?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes; it is intended to ask for a Vote on Account before March 31.

HOUSE DUTY.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether, in levying House Duty, the "annual value" is the same as the assessed value in Schedule A of the Income Tax; and, if not, then what is the definition of this "annual value"?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: If the annual value of a house is given separately for the purposes of Schedule A, the same value is taken for House Duty purposes. If it is not given separately under Schedule A, a valuation on the same principle is made for House Duty. The definition of "annual value" in the House Duty Act is "the full and just yearly rent," that is, the full value at which the premises are worth to be let by the year.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE, NAVY ESTIMATES.

Motion made and question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

ADMIRALTY ADMINISTRATION.

*MR. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.), in moving the Resolution of which he had given notice, wished to make it clear at the very outset that it was not his desire nor intention to make any attack whatever either upon the Administration generally or upon the Admiralty in particular. On the contrary, he took this opportunity of offering his humble congratulations to the Civil Lord as the only representative of his Department of the House, upon the really admirable Estimates presented to Parliament this year. Even in the short time which had elapsed since the Estimates were issued he had been able to examine them closely, and he believed that he expressed the universal opinion when he said that they were in many respects the most satisfactory and practical set of Estimates that had been drawn up for many a long day. To those who, like himself, had for so many years devoted what small influence they could bring to bear to the task of creating and arousing public opinion with regard to the Navy, it was a source of deep satisfaction to find that at last both Parties in the State had arrived not only at a theoretical agreement, but were showing by unmistakable evidence their determination to give the Naval protection which this country needs. It had been said that the present was an inopportune time for bringing forward this Resolution. Such was not his opinion. No better time could possibly be selected. He had noted the work of the present Board and of its immediate predecessors with a minuteness probably exceptional, and could tell of scores of instances where they had taken practical steps to render our defences more efficient, our preparations more complete. In some instances the changes had been small, in others they had been great. But every change had been an evidence of the sincere desire of the Naval Lords to make our Navy into a real fighting machine. That was just the reason why he brought forward this Resolution. If the Naval Lords were apathetic, discouraged or incompetent, there would not be the slightest hope of obtaining consideration for anything lik a serious change. But so clear was the evidence of a desire for reform and efficiency, that he was encouraged to make suggestions which under other circumstances would only be a waste of time. He was under no illusion in this matter. The change he advocated would not be made now or immediately, and the very last people who would consent to it would be right hon. Gentlemen on the two Front Benches, who not unnaturally were averse to change in the forms of administration to which they had been accustomed. The change would come in time, but it would probably come as so many other changes came at the Admiralty, as the result of the pressure of public opinion. He started on the assumption which no one would dispute, that the object, and the only object of maintaing the Navy was to enable it to carry on a successful war, and that towards this end, and this end alone, the whole organisation of the Navy should be directed. Was the organisation of the Navy at the present time directed to that object? Was there any proper organisation of the Navy for the purpose of carrying on successful war? He thought there was not, and if asked for reasons he would say they were twofold. In the first place, if such an organisation existed, we should know of its existence; in the second place, the invariable experience of the past teaches us that such an organisation does not exist. He had long learned to disbelieve in the mysteries of Public Departments, or to credit them with great reserves of power and resource beyond what were known to the public. Who at the Admiralty was charged with the preparation of the Navy for war? He did not mean the mere equipment of ships and the provision of guns, but the planning beforehand of the operations of war, the distribution of the Navy with a view to the carrying out of those operations, and the execution of those plans when a war breaks out. Was there such a person at the Admiralty? Clearly not; and, further, clearly there could not be. The professional members of the Board of Admiralty, like the civilian members, were the mere creatures of a political party, not one of them appointed for any definite term of office, not one of them, however excellent his qualifications, certain to retain his post, and the tenure of office of all of them might be a day, a month, a year, or five years. If business, especially such business, could be done on such conditions, the Admiralty was altogether different from any other institution in the world. It would be hard to select a more capable set of officers than the present Sea Lords. But to-morrow some vote upon a purely political question might end the official existence of all of them. He was aware that the practice of removing the Naval Lords on the change of Administration had been of late greatly and most happily modified. It still remained the tradition though the practice had been departed from, and it was just this fact that encouraged him to press his point. He found that in the last 24 years there had been no less than 30 changes among the naval members of the Admiralty Board. In 1885–6 there were, including the First Lord, but not the other Parliamentary Members, no less than 12 changes during the two years. Could any business, much less such difficult and complicated business as this, be conducted under such conditions? The changes on the Board of Admiralty were too frequent for its work to be done with the maximum of efficiency. In any private business a constant change of directors would be deemed detrimental to its interests; the same thing applied just as much in this case; and until the initial difficulty was overcome and naval officers in charge of responsible duties were given time to thoroughly learn those duties, and then to apply the knowledge they had acquired, there would never be perfect administration of the Navy and preparation in case of war. On the Continent much thought and care were given to the Naval and Military Establishments, and it was an essential preliminary to the conduct of war that a specially qualified officer should be trained to prepare for such a contingency, and should be supported by a properly trained staff. He had no wish to copy Continental models, but it was necessary that some system of that kind should be adopted in this country in order to secure continuity of service in the most responsible positions. No doubt there would be some difficulty in obtaining an ideal system to carry out the principle he advocated, but one must speedily be adopted unless the efficiency of the Navy were to suffer to an alarming extent. Then, again, the division of duties on the Board of Admiralty was not calculated to have the best results. He trusted that there had been some re-arrangement and re-adjustment of those duties since the Report of the Hartington Committee. The duties of the three Sea Lords alone occupied nearly a page of small print; and there was too great an accumulation of duties on one officer. For instance, the First Lord had charge, among a host of other matters, of all business relating to the Navy, of the Mersey Conservancy, and political questions. The First Naval Lord was charged with the distribution and the organisation of the Fleet, maritime defences, strategical questions, the Intelligence Department, naval uniforms, and a number of other details; while the Second Naval Lord had charge of the manning of the Fleet, the *personnel*, education of officers, and the Naval colleges; and the Third Naval Lord looked after the *matériel* generally. The Junior Lord was charged with the transport services and the coaling of the fleet. Clearly what was everybody's business was nobody's business, and the danger was aggravated by the fact that not one of these officers was responsible or could be made responsible for the advice he gave to the First Lord. Responsibility should be definitely placed upon their shoulders, and the First Sea Lord should be charged with the duty of being able to say at any moment whether, in his opinion, we were or were not prepared to undertake the dangers and risks of war. Lord Hartington's Commission reported that there was no system of co-operation between the two Services, and that there was practically no organisation of the Navy for war, but they had been told that some improve-had been effected of late. Certainly a Committee had been formed, with the object of producing harmony between the two Departments, and was composed of the Under Secretary for War, the First Sea Lord, the Director of Naval Ordnance, the Superintendent of Naval Reserves, the Adjutant General, the Inspector General of Fortifications, and the Director General of Artillery. No doubt that Committee did excellent work, but it was not work of such a character as was really wanted. As a matter of fact, it was powerless. It could only recommend, and had no chance whatever of securing any reforms or improvements which it might recommend. He had been told that it was an act of impertinence on the part of an outsider to criticise the Board of Admiralty, but he did not think the Members of the Board took that view themselves. Naval officers, some of whom were destined to hold office at the Admiralty, and others who had held high posts there, had again and again confirmed in the strongest possible manner his own views as to the deficiencies in our naval arrangements; and he was, therefore, compelled to disregard the counsel of those who told him that it was his duty to have implicit confidence in the Admiralty at any time. He had no wish to cast distrust upon the Admiralty officials, but complained that none of them were definitely charged with the duty he wished to see performed, and would trust absolutely to our Naval officers if they were only placed in a really fair position. Year after year they were told to trust the Admiralty and the Government to be prepared for the eventuality of war. Over and over again were they told the same thing, and with precisely the same allowance of contempt for those who took a somewhat opposite view. But what were the facts? When the Crimean war was entered into the Government of that day gave the same assurance that, no doubt, would be given to-night. But as a matter of fact, we were utterly unable to carry on operations in the Baltic, and when at last it was seen that special appliances were necessary to carry on the war, an order was given for 200 gunboats, and then it was found that there was not enough timber to build them. The result was, that they had in that emergency to be knocked up from green timber, and soon after left to rot, or got rid of in the best and most advantageous way possible. Then hon. Members would doubtless recollect the scare about the phantom fleet. In that case, again, precisely the same assurances had been given of the readiness of the Navy for war; but the country arose one morning to find that the statement was totally unfounded. Still later on, in the next war scare, they were told precisely the same thing; but the Navy was not then prepared for war, and the Admiralty knew it. Then came the story of the Northbrook programme, with just the same result. The House was assured, on the positive statement of a Cabinet Minister, that the Admiralty and Navy were prepared. But the contrary was soon discovered, and 11 millions sterling were spent in order to enable the Navy to contemplate the possibility of war, six millions of which money were absolutely thrown away. At the time when there was the scare of war with Russia, a very distinguished officer was actually appointed by the Admiralty, to his own certain knowledge, to report to them on the existing appliances for coast defence—to report upon the best scheme that could be improvised for the coast defence of the country in case war occurred. He had no doubt that if any hon. Member had got up in the House three days before and questioned the efficiency of our coast defences he would have been told by the Naval Minister of the day that the idea was preposterous. But the report of the officer proved the contrary; in fact, his very appointment to the duty proved that the Admiralty were not prepared for war. He now came to the Hamilton programme. He had great admiration for that programme; but until within a few days of its production no information was vouchsafed to the House that that great need existed. Indeed, quite a different idea prevailed, for there was a belief that any great augmentation of the Naval Estimates was unnecessary. But public opinion was aroused, and information of the real state of the case followed. Again, up to last year, no single suggestion had been made by any responsible official that our fortresses abroad required attention. But at least three commanders-in-chief in the Mediterranean, and two commanders at Gibraltar, had called attention in almost identical terms to the unsatisfactory condition of the fortress of Gibraltar, and to its inadequate equipment for Naval purposes. It was not until public attention was drawn to the question that any sort of official statement was made with respect to the works to be carried out at Gibraltar. Last year, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his statement with regard to the satisfactory character of our Naval defences, and made it on the specific authority of the Naval Lords, many of them were astounded by a statement which seemed to them to be utterly irreconcilable with what they believed to be the facts. Within 24 hours the Chancellor of the Exchequer was obliged to modify his statement. Why? Because by a fortunate chance he had committed himself to the proposition that the Naval Lords, as individuals, approved his statement. If the right hon. Gentleman had confined himself, like his predecessors, on such occasions to the usual form, and had told them that the Admiralty, or the First Lord of the Admiralty, was responsible for what he said, not a word would have been heard, he believed, of the enormously important correction which was supplied by the Naval Lords. No one, he hoped, would believe that he desired to undervalue the Navy, or that he doubted it would give a good account of itself in time of war. But our officers and men would be handicapped to a serious extent if their work were not prepared for them by a truly scientific method. Had the country any guarantee that such preparation even now existed? Could the Civil Lord of the Admiralty assure the country that the Naval preparations now were consonant with the views of the officers who would have to fight the Navy in case of war? The art of preparing for war was now a great scientific study. Little time would be allowed for preparation in the next war, for the methods of war were now sharp and short. He did not think anyone believed, despite the excellence of our Naval Lords; despite the real, earnest, and excellent work that was being done by the Admiralty; that our Naval arrangements were such as would be in existence if the Navy were being administered solely with the object of conducting war successfully. What he and others who thought with him desired was, in the first place, that the work of preparing the Navy for war, the strategical distribution of our fleets, the preparation and execution of the combined movements which war must render inevitable, should be put under the control of a competent Naval officer, with an adequate staff; that such an officer should be appointed, not for the life of a Government, but for a definite and adequate period, and that he, on his responsibility, should advise the Cabinet on all such matters as were entrusted to him. He had no desire to detract from the responsibility of the Admiralty. He wished rather to add to it. He wanted to get rid of the necessity for those perpetual scares which had caused so much anxiety to the country, and had reflected so much disgrace on our Naval organisation. But the scares would never be prevented until the country knew for certain that a responsible officer had, in the exercise of his statutory duty, considered the whole of the questions connected with our national defence, and had given his opinion with regard to them. It would be mere affectation to pretend, after the experience they had had, that they could have any confidence whatever in a mere Parliamentary statement to the effect that all that ought to be done had been done. It might be so in one case, but they knew that in 99 other cases it had not been so. He was not sanguine enough to hope that the change for which he looked would be made instantly, but in the years which he had devoted to acquiring knowledge and information on Naval matters he had learnt at any rate one thing—that reforms advocated from the outside, which were derided at at the outset, were in the end accomplished, especially if those reforms were advocated by men who had the welfare of the Service very closely at heart. He concluded by moving the Resolution of which he had given notice.

*SIR G. T. CHESNEY (Oxford), in rising to second the motion, expressed the opinion that the present time was particularly suitable for bringing forward a motion of this kind, and that there was nothing in that motion which was in any respect hostile to the position of the Government. Everybody who had seen the Estimates for the coming year and the Statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, would be satisfied that the Government were thoroughly alive to the importance of doing their duty to the country by largely increasing the efficiency of the Navy; but, at the same time, while this advance in naval policy had taken place, they were aware that it was due, not so much to any distinctive policy of the Government, as to the effect produced upon them by public opinion. Alarm and anxiety had been expressed now for a considerable time, and it was in consequence of this feeling that the Government, as patriotic representatives of the country, had collectively determined to come to the country with a very largely-increased demand for the Navy. That in itself was a highly satisfactory circumstance in the view of those who considered this increased expenditure as absolutely necessary for the safety of the country, and it also enabled those who were pressing the point at issue to come to the House and dissociate themselves entirely from any wish to discredit the present or past Governments. What they did contend was that, notwithstanding the present change or advance in policy now exhibited by the Government, the country was still in this unsatisfactory position, that its naval administration was still not based on a sound and satisfactory footing. It was, therefore, surely not only justifiable but appropriate and proper to bring this point under the notice of the House before they proceeded to consider the details of the Naval Estimates. It would, he thought, be apparent to anybody who had been through the Estimates, admirable, clear, and satisfactory as they were, that they were in all probability the result of a compromise between the different members of the Government. They all knew that, whenever a question of Army or Navy expenditure was under discussion, there were those members of the Government who pressed the necessity for increased expenditure, and others who, as guardians of the public purse, resisted it, and the final result was that a compromise was arrived at. This was an estimate of compromise. It was very satisfactory, no doubt, but that was the way it was arrived at. The proposals did not represent to the House any fixed standard which was to be reached in order to place our naval position on a perfectly safe and satisfactory footing. The First Lord of the Admiralty referred to a dock at Gibraltar. That was very satisfactory so far as it went, but many people were of opinion that a single dock there was absolutely insufficient; and he submitted that the House and the country ought to have some means of ascertaining what were the facts on this head, and what was the professional opinion of the responsible advisers of the Government. There was not in fact at this moment any person specifically responsible for advising the country what should be the strength and organisation of the Navy, and now, when we were making such progress towards making up for lost time and establishing the supremacy of England—now was the time to press for a reform in that respect, and to satisfy the country that machinery would be provided by which they would be enabled to know whether or not the measures taken from year to year were satisfactory and sufficient. It would of course be said that to have a permanent official who was not a political officer, and to make him responsible, would do away with the responsibility of the Government. No rational person would for a moment propose to do away with the responsibility of the Government. The Government must ultimately be responsible, but the House and the country were justified in requiring that they should have evidence before them that the Government had gone to work in a reasonable way by obtaining the advice of responsible persons, and if they had not taken such advice, then the country should know the reason why. It was said that if naval officers were placed in a position of that kind they would be for making things so safe that the finances of the country could not bear their demands. If they had to deal with irrational people like that, then the responsibility of the Government came into play in cutting down their demands; but at present there were no means of knowing whether the standard of the Government was, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, sufficient. This expression—the responsibility of Ministers, was an ambiguous one, constantly employed and misapplied in a variety of ways. For the Crimean war, with all its blunders, waste of money, and unnecessary loss of life, the Government of the day were no doubt in one sense responsible. But no one proposed to impeach any of the Ministers because they made such a terrible fiasco in the Crimea—a fiasco from which our military reputation had not yet recovered. So, if it should happen that we should in the future undergo some great naval disaster, no one would propose to bring the consequences of that disaster on any particular Minister or Government. The first question to consider, therefore, was, What was the standard upon which the Government were now proceeding? That point was one of supreme importance. It was often said that the aim and object in view was to make the English Navy as strong as those of any two other countries combined. That was a very dangerous proposition to adopt. In the case of war it was almost certain that we should have to contend with two navies. Was it, then, reasonable and safe that we should be satisfied with a Navy that was only just equal to any two others? The position of England was entirely different from that of any other country. We had enormously greater interests to protect, and our maritime responsibility was vastly greater than that of any two other countries. It would be the height of folly to risk our maritime superiority on the risk and chances to follow from a contest undertaken on conditions of bare equality with our adversaries. We ought to place our maritime supremacy on the basis of absolute certitude. And on this head the country ought to have before it the best professional opinion that could be obtained. At present no professional officer was responsible for the naval advice given by him, except in the sense in which a clerk was responsible to the head of his office for the way in which he did his work. The first thing that we had to do was to determine what the standard of efficiency for the Navy was to be. It was sometimes said that the increase of our Navy was likely to incite other nations to a competition for supremacy. For his part he believed that the enormous land armaments which were now maintained in Europe formed the best guarantee for peace, because each particular nation was now so strong in its defensive positions that it could not be attacked with any reasonable chance of success. The one element of insecurity in the present condition of Europe was the assumed insufficiency of the British fleet, and it behoved us, therefore, to render our naval supremacy unquestionable. What would constitute unquestionable supremacy was a point upon which the House was entitled to have a thoroughly trustworthy and definite opinion from the best authority obtainable. There was no reason why the Board of Admiralty should be a board of a political character—why, in other words, the principal officers at the Admiralty should not be permanent officials just as the principal officers of the Army were. The views of these officers as to the naval establishment necessary for the safety of the country could then be placed on record for the information of the House and the people in England, who would then be able to judge whether the Government were taking steps to give effect to those views with reasonable rapidity. This change would strengthen the position of the Government, for they would be able to show that they were acting as faithful stewards of the country's interests, that they were not influenced by passing panics or passing fits of parsimony, and that they were proceeding upon a well-defined and distinct plan. The Resolution of the hon. Member, then, would substitute for the present movable and shifting political board a permanent officer, with a staff under him, who would be directly responsible to the Government and the country. The hon. Member attached to his proposal the condition that this responsible officer should also be the officer charged with the administration of the Navy in the event of a war; but it did not appear to him necessary that this condition should be laid down. Indeed, it was doubtful whether one could always determine beforehand who should have the command in a war. But to the main principle of the hon. Member's Resolution he trusted that the Government would assent. The vital question of the Navy was receiving at last the attention which it deserved, and he hoped that the Government would include this really easy administrative change among the improvements which were to be effected. It was, no doubt, the fate of all proposals for administrative changes to receive at first only scanty support. For many years, he might venture to remark, he advocated unsuccessfully certain extensive reforms in connection with the Indian Army, but finally all those reforms were effected. He hoped that the administrative change now proposed would be accepted by the Government without delay. The more that House and the country considered the matter the stronger would become their conviction that it was a reform which ought to be carried out.

*SIR EDWARD J. REED (Cardiff) pointed out that the hon. and gallant Member who had seconded the Resolution had made a very singular reservation near the end of his speech, when he said that he did not agree with what was practically the only substantial proposal which the Resolution contained. The hon. Member who had brought the Resolution forward resented the allegation that it was in the nature of an obstruction in the way of the Navy Estimates; but, as he understood this Resolution, it would certainly, if agreed to, prevent any Naval Estimates from being considered by the House of Commons for some time to come, for it would be necessary to wait until some one should have been selected for the conduct of naval operations in the event of war, and until Estimates could be submitted with his approval and on his advice. The proposal was impracticable, and he was surprised at its coming from an hon. Member who took such great and meritorious interest in Naval matters. He wondered whether hon. Gentlemen who supported this Motion had ever considered the disadvantages it would introduce. No doubt it was perfectly easy to point out flaws in the present system, and he apprehended that in a great democratic State like ours, where a popular Assembly had to give approval to proposals made in connection with the Naval Service, there would always be grounds of objection both to the policy pursued and to the results obtained. But that was no new thing. The whole history of the world showed that you must suffer disadvantages in respect of military objects in a democratically governed country. Yet it was a remarkable fact that, having had a seat in this House for 21 years, he had never known a Naval Estimate reduced by the House of Commons even to the extent of a single sixpence. This House had invariably supported any and every Government in the demands which it had made upon the public purse for Naval Expenditure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, too, who, in the exercise of his great functions, must have viewed with care and anxiety the growth of Naval Expenditure, must feel perfectly sure that the House of Commons would support him in the proposals submitted upon this occasion. There was another difficulty that arose in his mind when he heard this scheme proposed, and that was that the officer, who was to be selected beforehand to conduct a war which was not even in prospect, and the nature of which was unknown, was to go and sit at the Admiralty for a term of years. He would give an illustration of what might result from this in connection with a minor matter which happened when he was at the Admiralty. He thought it was very desirable that the carpenter and the engineer of a new ship, the men who were to be appointed to her, should be appointed at an early stage of her construction, so that they should be thoroughly acquainted with the specialities and peculiarities of the vessel. The Admiralty acceded to that recommendation of his; but what happened? On the very day on which the ship sailed from the port in which she was built to proceed on active service the carpenter was invalided, and the effect was that, instead of several men getting a knowledge of the ship, as they would have done but for the appointment of the special officer, this one officer absorbed all the information and carried it off into his sick-room just at the moment when it might have been most wanted. The result of the proposed change at the Admiralty would be that we should be paralysed. When the Navy Estimates were presented the First Lord of the Admiralty, or whoever represented the Admiralty in this House, could say no more than that they had put into shape the demands of this single Naval officer, whose wish and will were to predominate, and even the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom the House of Commons could now call to account, would be entitled to turn round and say:—

> "You took the power from our hand; you enfeebled and overshadowed the responsibility of the Ministry."

His experience of the Naval Service led him to affirm this proposition—namely, that this officer, however carefully selected, would not have been in his place a year, nor six months, nor three months, before he would come into conflict with a large number of the Naval Service in respect of the opinion and advice he gave. He did not know that it was any reflection upon Naval officers to say that in the exercise of their judgment, under all the varying conditions of service at sea, they formed very different opinions. And even when the Board of Admiralty had been censured in this House he had sympathised with them very much on this ground—that he did not believe you could form a Board of Admiralty, each particular Member of which would hold the same opinion as his colleagues on Naval matters. When they were building the earlier ironclads an important question arose as to what defence and protection should be given to the captain and officers of the ship in respect of the pilot towers. Not once, but frequently, the Board of Admiralty called on the Admirals in command of squadrons to consider the question and report upon it. The reports were so conflicting, so entirely opposite in many cases to each other, that nothing ever came of it; and he, an unfortunate civilian, had to do the best he could. He remembered very well in one ship he erected a pilot tower that it was thought would satisfy any officer. When the ship was finished and the Admiral (a highly responsible officer) went on board he denounced it as a most extravagant thing and an unnecessary waste of material, and said—

> "Why was not this armour given to us in the form of additional guns?"

He went back to the Admiralty and altered and greatly reduced the pilot tower, conformably to the opinion of this important and influential man, in the next ship he built. That ship was finished, and she was inspected by another Admiral, who said to him—

> "My dear Reed, this is a splendid ship; but why on earth have you not given her a pilot tower like the other vessel?"

Naval officers were excellent, fearless, independent men, and the Naval Lords carried to the Admiralty the latest and best knowledge the Admiralty could enjoy. Under these circumstances it seemed a most extraordinary thing to propose that the knowledge and responsibility which were now at hand should be set aside for the purpose of installing in power and authority a Naval officer who should be supreme over the Board of Admiralty, and even over the House of Commons itself. Such a system was not only unreasonable, but altogether preposterous, and would not work for a single year.

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) thought the hon. Member for Cardiff had, perhaps, hardly done justice to the speech and Resolution of the hon. Member for Belfast, because he had passed over the admirable speech of the hon. Member and he had hammered his Resolution. He admitted that in a matter of extreme difficulty, such as the responsibility to be instituted for the professional advice to the Cabinet in the case both of the Army and Navy, while it was not hard to show the defects of the present system on careful examination, so it was not difficult to hammer pretty hard any proposed substitute for it, and those of them who were really without any foregone conclusion, desiring only to arrive at or, if necessary, create that system which would be best for the defensive power of the country and give the House the greatest certainty that the money it voted had been spent to the best advantage, must agree that the constitution and creation of such a system must be a difficult matter, on which there would be differences of opinion. The remarks of the hon. Member for Cardiff brought them to the conclusion that responsibility for professional advice on purely professional questions, such as the class of ships, must rest wholly with civilians, which was scarcely reassuring to the House when it recollected the great mistakes which civil Ministers had committed in the past in reference to questions of this kind. The hon. Member for Cardiff had taken rather an old-world view in saying that in the strictest sense of the word responsibility in these matters must rest upon the Cabinet, because, now that war has become an immensely scientific matter, it could hardly be said that any civilians were able to assume the responsibility of doing more than acting upon the best professional advice they could command. The responsibility of civilian Members of the Cabinet could not be put very high. They could only say what was the best advice they had received, and the question for the House to consider was the form in which that advice should be tendered and the extent to which those who gave it should be made responsible. Last year upon the Army Estimates he had moved a Resolution, general in its terms, applying both to the Army and Navy, and they then had had a very interesting speech from the Leader of the Opposition, whose absence from the House and its cause they all regretted. The Leader of the Opposition spoke with great weight upon the subject, because, although he had never been at the head of either the Army or the Navy, yet he had been the second man in the Cabinet which had ruled this country for many years, and his words were worthy all the greater consideration on account of the habitual moderation of his language. The Leader of the Opposition, in his speech last year, and also in a letter he wrote about that time, admitted that it was difficult to defend the present system of administration either as regarded the Army or Navy, and he added that some better system of responsibility might be easily devised with regard to both. The Government had been asked by the hon. Member for Belfast to give an assurance, which seemed a very easy one, that the Navy Estimates were based upon a consideration of the needs of possible war. They had never had a sufficiently clear and emphatic declaration in these Debates that the needs of possible war had been kept carefully in view. The mover of the Amendment did not attack anyone, but he attacked the present system, and asked whether the present expenditure was accompanied by the real belief of the House that they knew the Navy was really ready for war. The House very naturally considered the British Navy the first Navy in the world, and thought that they understood their business better than foreign nations. But when they found in all parts of the world, amongst countries that had given most attention to scientific preparation for war, as regarded the armies and fleets, a system of higher professional responsibility for the advice tendered than existed in this country, then he thought the matter was one well worthy of consideration. The reply might be that they had in this country a closer civil and financial responsibility in the House of Commons than existed in any other country in the world. That was true as far as Germany was concerned, but in many countries they had the same financial and Cabinet system as this country, and this was found compatible with the system of higher professional responsibility for advice which he had described. The hon. Member for Belfast had pointed out that they had been constantly assured throughout their history that their Navy was perfect, and it had as constantly happened afterwards that matters were not as they had been described. They had had the declaration that further expenditure was unnecessary, followed by an increased expenditure afterwards, which did not indicate that state of continuity of naval policy which the

House had a right to expect. It might be said that the Cabinet was responsible. But Cabinets shifted and changed, and the first act of an incoming Cabinet had often been to tell them that the outgoing Cabinet had mismanaged the Navy and that everything was wrong. A greater continuity in the Office of First Sea Lord of the Admiralty would produce a greater feeling of responsibility on the part of the Government for the advice which they gave to the House for him. The hon. Member for Belfast had given one concrete instance to justify the doubts which he had with regard to the working of the present system, and that was the case of Gibraltar. It was admitted that a great deal required to be done to bring that important Naval Station up to the requirements of war, and yet till a deputation went to the Prime Minister, practically nothing had been done to show that the Admiralty had any sense of the pressing importance of the matter, or, if they had, that they had been able to overcome resistance somewhere else. Many other instances could be given. Take the case of some of their coaling stations. Sierra Leone, for example, was a place which was vital for guarding the Cape route in time of war. The Navy were unanimous in the opinion that they ought to maintain their position there. They had fortified the place, guns and forts were there, but gunners were not there, because of the unhealthiness of the climate. Yet Naval men held that they ought to be secured against everything like this, and that in case of the outbreak of war they ought not to be called upon to convey troops to a distant coaling station. Every Naval man admitted that that was a dangerous duty to throw on a fleet in case of a sudden outbreak of war. He and those who shared his views held that if the necessity for being in constant readiness in case of war had been kept steadily in view, the present state of things would not have been allowed to continue in Sierra Leone. He would give other instances. The hon. Gentleman representing the Admiralty, in reply to a question put by him the other day, said he did not know whether, in addition to the French Navy, the Japanese Navy was now supplied with high explosives, and that it would be contrary to the interests of the public service to say whether any of our ships were supplied with high explosives. But it was perfectly well known that not an ounce of high explosives was carried on any British ship at the present time. For the last three years the Government had expressed doubts whether our ships navigating in tropical seas could carry these explosives in safety; but the French ships were now carrying them to China and to Madagascar. That was a matter worthy of inquiry. But he would give a much more important instance. In the Naval Estimates for the present year there was no proposal to lay down a single new ironclad of any kind; and when they heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer and others of the very high responsibility of the Cabinet, there was something to be said for the House of Commons being informed of the reasons which made it desirable to build cruisers rather than ironclads. They had the admission in Government documents that a superiority of five to three was required to shut up an enemy, and that that superiority must extend to numbers as well as to strength, for a few great ironclads could not shut up a great number of small ones. That formed a certain apparent reason for building smaller ironclads for these purposes, but the House had no information as to the reasons by which the Government had been guided in the matter. No doubt the Government had acted upon advice, but there was not one great authority who could be named as their adviser on the point. They need not, however, go behind the return which the Government themselves had laid before the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had supported a large Navy on the strong ground, from a Liberal point of view, that it made us free from alliances. But when the Government took as their text equality with two great Powers, he would remind them that equality with two Powers did not mean superiority to two Powers. And when they told the House that the superiority of five to three in the number of ironclads was required, the House knew that we had no such superiority as regards these two Powers, or even as regards one of them. The return laid before the House last year showed that the number of British ironclads in existence was 39, as against 34 sea-going ironclads and 28 armoured coast-defence ships possessed by France and Russia. France alone had 41 ships, including armour-clad coast defenders, against our 39. These facts were reason for doubt as to whether we were prepared for war in spite of our great expenditure. If the constituencies were to support willingly and cheerfully this large expenditure upon the fleet, it was necessary that they should feel sure that the fleet was thoroughly prepared for war. Then there was another point. There was to be an increase this year in the number of men. But the House was quite unaware of the exact facts as to the number of men required for mobilisation. They had the statement in authorised quarters that something like 110,000 trained men would be required in the event of a complete mobilisation of the fleet. The Reserves were to a large extent absent from the country, and could not be depended upon at short notice; and there was reason to doubt whether in these circumstances there could be that rapidity of mobilisation on the part of the British fleet which seemed to him as great a necessity as rapidity of mobilisation on the part of the German or the French army. A certain increase in the number of the men was proposed, but the House knew nothing of the exact numbers required, and under this doctrine of Ministerial responsibility they were asked to vote the money blindly. It would be far better if the Government took the House into their confidence to the extent to which they were obliged to take foreign Governments into their confidence, whether they liked it or not, and tell the House the grounds on which the particular demands were made. The sole purpose of all this very large expenditure was to enable us to achieve victory at sea, which was essential to our very existence as a nation; and what the resolution asked was an assurance that the Government had had under its consideration the nature of the effort that would be called for to secure victory, and the distribution of these efforts between the land and the sea forces. This year we were spending between the land forces and sea forces, including India, something like £58,000,000 sterling, and, with the expenditure of the colonies, the expenditure of the Empire this year on defence would not fall far short of £60,000,000 sterling. That was the highest figure ever reached in time of peace. That enormous expenditure ought to be justified, not by strict doctrines of Cabinet responsibility, but by very real and personal responsibility on the part of those Members of the Cabinet who could afford the time to look into it. Last year the House was led to understand that a Committee of the Cabinet would in future consider these matters; but he was bound to say that, while the Navy Estimates of this year gave some colour to the view that such a Committee existed, there was no reason to suppose that the Army Estimates had been framed under its supervision. What the House wanted was an assurance that there was a joint consideration of the necessities of the two services, and a joint preparation of the two services for war. The Hartington Commission reported that up to that date there had been no such joint consideration. The hon. Member for Belfast had pointed out that since that time a Committee of the two services had been appointed, but that Committee had not the weight of authority, either by its composition or the services of its Members, to take the place of a Committee of the Cabinet. The members of the Hartington Commission differed amongst them, but, as regarded the Navy they were, up to a certain point, unanimous, and that unanimity went in the direction of the Resolution. The second point in the Resolution really was that an officer should be selected whose judgment, as principal adviser, the Government should vouch to the House. That suggestion, if adopted, would not, in his belief, involve a less real responsibility than existed at present on the part of the Government in regard to their estimates. He did not see that their responsibility would be weakened in any way—especially financially—if they were to vouch a single man instead of a board of men. It took years to correct mistakes—in regard to ironclads, for instance—and the House could not be too careful in insisting on responsibility of the kind he had indicated. The real point was whether the First Sea Lord was to be freed from administrative duties such as he was saddled with at the present time. Being so saddled, some duties of advising were now taken out of his hands and placed in those of the Second or Third Sea Lords. He believed that a comparatively small change would do good by concentrating more and more upon the First Sea Lord—who must be a good man, upon whose advice the Government would be glad to act—the full duty of advising in every matter of naval responsibility, and would free his hands more and more from administrative work. Not only was such a course suggested by the Hartington Commission, but it was a business proposal, supported by all authority. Captain Mahan might be quoted in support of it, and Admiral Hornby had also expressed an opinion in that direction. The suggestions of the Hartington Commission were that the First Sea Lord should advise the Cabinet on the duties of the Fleet in time of peace as well as in time of war. The Report of that Commission carried immense authority, because that portion of it was unanimous. Yet, although the Report was dated in 1889, and was presented to the House in 1890, he did not believe that up to the present time the responsibility of the First Sea Lord had been increased or his administrative duties taken away in the manner suggested. The evils of the present system were admitted, but he did not believe it was above British statesmanship to cure those evils. There was at the present time great reason why this question should be faced. Some of the neighbouring Powers were unrestful. There was one neighbouring Power who, since she ended a struggle of life and death with a debt of 800 millions, had increased that debt to 1,200 millions, and whose expenditure in a single year was now 140 millions. That Power had been decreasing her expenditure upon her land forces and increasing that upon her Navy, and she had lately been spending three millions more a year upon her Navy than she spent a few years ago. He dissented with the argument that the only result of an increase in our Naval expenditure would be to make other Powers increase theirs. On the contrary, the result was quite the opposite. For example, only last year, when we increased our Naval expenditure, the Power to which he had been referring actually decreased the expenditure upon her Navy. But, whatever the result on other Powers, the risk must be faced if increased expenditure and efficiency were necessary. In the face of repeated warnings, Governments in this country assumed a transcendent responsibility if they hesitated to give both to their Admiralty and to their War Office the very best administration which was possible in time of peace as well as in time of war.

*LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing) said, that the object of the Motion was said to be to suggest some practical improvement in the existing system of administration. He was in almost entire accord with the concluding portion of the speech of the right hon. Baronet. The Mover and Seconder had, however, proposed that some one individual should practically supersede the Board of Admiralty—in other words, to set up a Naval autocrat who should dictate to the Government what Naval proposals should be introduced from year to year to Parliament. His hon. Friend, in moving the Resolution, spoke of the disadvantage of some 30 officers having occupied positions of responsibility in 24 years, but he (the speaker) looked upon that as a distinct advantage. He would bring the ablest young naval officers, fresh from the sea, into the Admiralty, and let them learn the difficulties of carrying on a central organisation of that kind. In every case where that had been done, it had proved beneficial both to those officers and to the Government. But if they took the actual number of First Sea Lords, it would be seen that during 10 years there had been only four, and of these two had retired by supersession under the rules. Did the system of the Board of Admiralty really work so badly as had been suggested? The outward and visible increase of the Navy was apparent, but he maintained that the improvements in organisation and efficiency were really far greater. We had improved our whole Naval system. He did not assert that it yet approached perfection, but he believed that the Admiralty were doing their duty very well, and that it would be an unwise step for Parliament to turn the present system topsy-turvy. If the First Naval Lord was to be responsible for the efficiency of the Fleet, he must retain control of matters of discipline, and questions relating to discipline must come before him, though in 99 cases out of 100 they were so dealt with beforehand as to take him scarcely any time to give a decision upon them. Then, again, how could a First Naval Lord be responsible for the condition of the Fleet and its readiness for war if he had not control of the leave of officers? No one officer could, however, deal with all the questions enumerated by the right hon. Baronet; if he could, there would, moreover, be nothing left for anyone else to do. All the speakers asked the question—Was the country prepared for war? Was there a competent Naval officer who would say that we were prepared for any questions that might arise under the emergency of war? But the first question he would put upon that would be, What was meant by war? Against whom was the war to be carried on? This would be the first question that any Naval officer would ask if asked for his opinion. Supposing the officer suggested should come to the conclusion that the Navy of this country should be strengthened, so as to be equivalent to four of the strongest navies in the world, what would the Cabinet say to that? They would say the Estimates must depend on the policy they pursued, that they had control of that policy, and that they declined to put on the people of this country a taxation which was altogether unnecessary because of that policy. In such a case, what would occur? Did anyone suppose that the House of Commons would support the official suggested, and not be guided by the Government? Of course, the House would support the Government, and neglect the advice of the official. It seemed to be thought that more attention would be paid to the report of this Naval official, than was given to the statement of the Board of Admiralty. Had the hon. Baronet observed the result of the system abroad? He and the right hon. Baronet had been some time in that House, and they could not recall one occasion on which the House of Commons had refused to take the financial proposals made by the Government on behalf of the Navy. But the French Chamber was everlastingly interfering with the proposals made to it. It was one constant fight, and only the other day one of the ablest naval men in France Admiral Gervais, had to retire in consequence of interference by the Parliamentary Committee with his ideas and proposals. In Germany they had Parliament constantly refusing to vote for what was proposed. Therefore, whatever might be the failings of their system, it gave them a Parliamentary authority which did not prevail anywhere else. He therefore thought it wise to adhere to their existing system. Critics of Naval affairs had to get this elementary fact into their minds—that the amount of construction in a given year did not depend on the amount of expenditure for that year. It was the realised expenditure in previous years. It so happened that, two years before the Naval Defence Act, there were large additions made to the strength of the Navy, because provision had been made for the construction of ironclads. It was a curious fact that, although this year's Estimates were higher than they had been for several years, in no recent year had there been so small a number of completed ships as in this year. It was unavoidable; they could not help it. The right hon. Baronet gave some strong illustrations of the necessity of some change in the condition of Gibraltar, and so far he agreed with him. They would never reach a satisfactory state in those matters until the Admiralty was made responsible. This touched a large question, but the more he looked into it the clearer it was to his mind that they must move in the direction of transferring the duty to the Admiralty. At Portsmouth, Chatham and Devonport they had large bodies of thoroughly trained Marines, but they were the only men who never went into the forts. His hon. Friend put his finger on what the difficulty was when he asked what was the standard of strength. They decided that some years ago, and he believed the Government continued that course in making the Navy up to the strength of the combined force of the two strongest Naval Powers. If there were hon. Members in that House who considered that standard too low, let them make a Motion for the increase of the standard. To appoint an official as suggested would hardly lead to the increase in the standard for the Navy. That could be done by other and more simple means. He did not know whether his hon. Friend proposed to Divide the House upon this Motion, but certainly if he did he should Vote against him. Above all things, they must abstain from making any one man the autocrat of the future fortunes of the British Navy. Let him explain what that meant. One of the ablest of the French Admiralty authorities was an autocrat, who held very strong views. His plan was to attack open ports and torpedo merchant ships. He stopped the building of ironclads and built torpedo-boats. Two of these turned turtle, and the others were put out of commission, and for years after the whole Naval Programme was upset in the French dockyards. His opinion was that no Naval officer was qualified to act the part suggested, and that if an official was appointed and invested with the authority suggested, and made a misuse of the vast powers so given him, the consequences might be far reaching, and even fatal to our naval importance.

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee) thought the House would now be willing that he should make a short statement on behalf of the Admiralty on the Motion submitted to the House by the Member for West Belfast. A copious Debate had taken place, and the particularly excellent speech of the noble Lord, to which they had all listened with great attention, would relieve him from the necessity of making a statement which he otherwise should have submitted to the House. The Debate had travelled very wide. He conceived it to be his duty, as representing the Department, to go back to the terms of the Resolution which the House was asked to pass before it would assent to the Admiralty Estimates now before them. There had been a good deal of debate, even among the friends of the Motion, as to what the Motion really meant. He would come to that directly, but as to the procedure of the hon. Member it was plain that his Motion was a direct attack on the Estimates and nothing else. The hon. Member would refuse to Vote any money for the Navy until he received the assurance embodied in his Resolution. He did not know whether the hon. Member approved of the Estimates.

Lord G. Hamilton.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER was understood to reply in the affirmative.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, the hon. Member would not vote for them until he had the assurance asked for in his Motion, and after that he went on to say he would accept no assurance that could be given on this question by any representative of the Admiralty. Why did not the hon. Member wait until he had seen the Estimates before he decided that it was necessary to interpose any conditions whatever before the granting of the money by the House of Commons? This resolution was laid on the Table of the House before it was known what the Government were going to propose, and he should have thought that, finding the proposals of the Government so "admirable," the hon. Gentleman would have withdrawn his Resolution and allowed the Government to proceed to their consideration. The hon. Member, however, wanted an assurance, first of all, that the Estimates submitted to Parliament by the Government were "based upon a consideration of the needs of possible war by sea and land." The second assurance asked for was that the Estimates were based on "the consideration of advice tendered in that behalf by the Naval officer selected for the conduct of the Naval operations in case of war." As to the first point, he did not know why any assurance should be asked for at all. But if the hon. Member really wanted an assurance, and would be gracious enough to accept it, he had no hesitation whatever in giving it. These Estimates had been based on nothing but "a consideration of the needs of possible war by sea and land." But then a difficulty arose when the Committee came to consider the second condition imposed by the hon. Member. It was a point, however, upon which those hon. Members who had supported the hon. Gentleman did not apparently agree with him, because the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Sir G. Chesney) openly dissented from the interpretation put by the hon. Member on the second branch of his Resolution. He did not propose to enter into those considerations which had bulked so largely in the debate, but which were not involved in any interpretation of the Resolution. For instance, he had nothing to do with the question of the increased control of the House of Commons in placing it in direct connection with the Naval Adviser of the Government. It was not in the Resolution. But the second branch of the Resolution might mean one or other of two very different things, he did not know which. War was possible anywhere, because there was hardly a portion of the world in which the interests of England were not such as to make war possible at any time. Probable war was a different matter; and he thought he would be a bold as well as a bad man who declared that war was probable either now or at any other time with another Power. Who was the Admiral who was likely to conduct the actual operations in war? In the case of the Mediterranean, for example, he would be the commander-in-chief of the station. Was the commander-in-chief to telegraph from the Mediterranean to the Admiralty and to tell them what Estimates in his opinion they ought to submit to the House of Commons? Did the hon. Member mean this to be the effect of his Resolution? If that was not his object, then the hon. Member must mean this—that there must be a person not in actual command of a fleet, but an Adviser of the Admiralty, who should advise the Department as to the conduct of operations in war, and that he should have control of the general organisation and direction of affairs. But that was the main duty which fell on the gallant Admiral who for the time being was the First Naval Lord of the Admiralty. If this was not this officer's business he did not know what it was. He had now been two or three years at the Admiralty, and he knew something of the mode in which the gallant Admiral conducted his business; and his experience was that the First Sea Lord exactly discharged those duties. Reference had been made to an outside agitation which was represented by the Resolution now before the House. He had made himself acquainted with the official literature of this movement, and he held in his hand a couple of volumes which gave a description of the Board of Admiralty. It began by stating that the Board of Admiralty was a legal fiction, and then it proceeded to describe the practice and constitution of the Board in terms which were to him somewhat of a surprise, for it was all wrong. The Board of Admiralty in a sense was a Board of equals. It did hold meetings and it recorded decisions. The First Lord was the head of the Board, and the other members were more or less equal; but there was one member who stood out in all Naval matters prominently as compared with the other members, and that was the First Sea Lord. But the First Sea Lord did not alone impose his advice as to war preparations on the Board; he had junior colleagues, of less experience no doubt, who possessed a voice in any arrangements being made. It was exactly this consideration which the House was now being called upon to take into account. He believed that the First Sea Lord had in succession from his predecessors, and had in preparation for his successors, and in his own possession, plans of preparation, organisation, and mobililsation conceived with a view to the needs of possible war, and nothing else. In addition to this there was a Joint Defence Committee, on which the chief official advisers of the Government on naval and military matters sat. There was a committee in actual working order, and it existed simply for the purpose of considering all those points to which attention had been called, and to advise the Government thereon. There was, besides, a Joint Colonial Committee, of a similar character, which acted in cooperation with the other bodies. The right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean referred to the suggestion made last year in favour of the constitution of a Cabinet Committee which should undertake some consideration of the needs of the Army and the Navy, looking at them as the two arms which would be used together in the protection of the same interests. He could speak with some confidence about the Board of Admiralty; but he thought that he was within his right in saying that that suggestion had been acted upon, and that such a Committee had been in existence during the past year, and had fulfilled the functions which it had been sought to cast upon it. This being the case, he did not know what further assurance he could give to the hon. Member, because he believed that the provision above described fulfilled all the conditions which the House might reasonably deem to be necessary. He concluded by inviting the House to reject the Resolution.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, that the late First Lord of the Admiralty had made an appeal to him as one of the Members of the Hartington Commission, which he could not refrain from responding to. It was quite true that Lord Hartington's Commission, while finding fault with the constitution of the War Department, did, on the whole, praise the Admiralty. Though he sympathised with the main principle advocated by the mover and seconder of the Resolution, he could not, as a practical man, understand what it was these hon. Gentlemen recommended. Did they propose the creation of a special Naval adviser separate from the Admiralty? As to what the duties and responsibilities of the office would be the House had no details. If the proposal As to what the duties and responsibilities of the office would be, the House had no details. If the proposal meant that the position of the First Sea Lord was to be augmented and still further strengthened, it would be well for the House to consider the recommendations of the Hartington Commission. That Commission, of which he was a member, went most carefully into the duties and functions of the First Sea Lord, and they appeared to be precisely those recommended by the hon. Mover and Seconder of this Motion. The First Sea Lord had to advise the Government as to what the strength of the Fleet should be, as to its preparedness and efficiency, and as to the points of danger which it should be ready to meet. He was a sort of adviser and *amicus curiæ* to the First Lord of the Admiralty. If the Hartington Commission recommended some slight redistribution of some of the First Sea Lord's duties, that was not enough to affect his duties at large. In the main, he believed that the Admiralty had carried out all that the Commission recommended; and that the position of the First Sea Lord was everything that the country could properly require. The only possible question could be as to the term of his office—that he should not retire with the Government of the day. But that was not a material point, and it had been shown that the First Sea Lord did retain office for a fairly long period. If his duties were to be further extended, very serious difficulties would arise. The hon. Member for Oxford had suggested that the position of the First Sea Lord should be that of a Member of the Legislative Council of India, who had the power to record his dissent when he differed from the Viceroy, and to have it sent to the Secretary of State. That arrangement answered very well in the Government of India. It left the Viceroy supreme upon the spot, though it placed a check on his action which was especially valuable in the case of Viceroys newly sent out. But that was because the dissent was recorded for the common superior of the Viceroy and the dissenting Member of the Council—for the Secretary of State. There was no House of Commons to be answerable to; and in that was the enormous difference. The First Lord of the Admiralty was answerable to the House of Commons, and if he had a Naval Lord sitting at his side who could place upon record his dissent from the proposals of the Government in the archives of the Admiralty, so that it could be called for by the House of Commons, the position of things would be intolerable for the First Lord of the Admiralty. With the present constitution of the Treasury Bench, no First Lord could possibly stand such an arrangement; the situation would be impossible according to the present rules of English public life. If the First Sea Lord, or any possible Naval Officer existing in the imagination of the hon. Mover or Seconder, were to have the duty of framing plans for the maintenance or strengthening of the British Navy, on what principle was he to proceed? Was it to be on the standard of equality to a number of other Navies, or on the still higher standard of capacity for defending the British Empire and protecting its commerce all over the world? There was a great difference between these two standards. He agreed with his hon. Friend the Member for Oxford that the standard of equality to two or three other Navies was wholly insufficient, but it was at least a standard; and the first thing such a Naval Officer as was proposed would have to do would be to inquire of the Government of the day on what principle the Navy's strength was to be estimated. That crucial question must be answered by the Government of the day. If the country were to maintain its Naval position, the House of Commons and the nation at large must be competent to understand the question of the Navy. If the electors were indifferent, or incompetent, to fill their high position among the peoples of the world, then there was not the least use in putting a responsibility, which could never be enforced, upon any person. The only hope was to fix the responsibility on the Government of the day; he did not believe in shifting it to someone behind the scenes. There was at present a Board of Naval Advisers, with the First Sea Lord at its head, and he, presumably, was the best Naval Officer of the day. Someone—the Civil Lord—had said that the First Sea Lord had plans in his head. He firmly believed that. He remembered Lord Hood coming before the Hartington Commission, and he was sure that Lord Hood had every one of the considerations now urged in his head, and the details of them on paper.

Admiral FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): That was not so in 1889.

Sir R. TEMPLE said that he was speaking of the time of the Hartington Commission, which, he was sure, did a vast amount of good. Lord Hood asked whether the Commission would like to see his plans; but the Commission regarded them as too confidential. He had not referred to many points raised in the preceding speeches, because those points could be dealt with on the Estimates. Then there was the question of Sierra Leone, but it appeared to him that the Debate was a preliminary one. He was afraid that if they were to come to details on the Motion, he should have some difficulty in voting for it, though he cordially acknowledged the patriotic spirit which animated both the Mover and Seconder.

*Mr. H. E. KEARLEY (Devonport) said, he was somewhat sorry to hear the noble Lord suggest that the hon. Member for Belfast, by moving this Resolution, was making a direct attack on the Estimates. The Estimates came almost as a welcome surprise, and showed, he thought, a determination on the part of the Admiralty to act upon the conviction which had been expressed in the country, that we required a more adequate navy. He did not think the occasion of the Motion was inopportune. His hon. Friend the Civil Lord seemed to have paid too much attention to the technical terms of the Resolution, and did not seem inclined to accept its spirit. He thought it was generally understood that Resolutions such as this were merely pegs upon which to hang speeches, so that the question might be discussed. There was one piece of information which came from the Civil Lord which was certainly satisfactory—namely, that the Committee of the Cabinet was now working. He did not think they had had any public declaration to that effect before. To his mind, the repeated changing of the Naval First Lord seemed contrary to business principles. One question which it was necessary to ask was, whether the Admiralty had considered the requirements which would be needed for this country to meet and defeat the two strongest Naval Powers of Europe. The accepted standard of the two Front Benches was that we should be equal in strength to the two strongest Naval Powers in Europe. The right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean had given figures to show that we were not able to hold our own against two such Powers. It was said that we were equal to the strength of the two strongest Naval European Powers; he did not admit that, and even if it were true, it would not meet the case. If we were going to hold our own, we must have a positive superiority, because our duty in time of war would not be to act on the defensive, but to seek out the enemy, compel him to fight, or, if he declined a contest, shut him up in his ports. The noble Lord had said that on the Continent the system prevailed of a naval lord or admiral being responsible for the naval policy, and that the Chamber of Representatives, in France, for example, was frequently in conflict with this man, with the result that the Estimates were repeatedly cut down. He altogether omitted to tell them, however, that the Estimates in France, were frequently increased. Coming to the question of what evidence there was to justify this Motion, he said that the three naval programmes which they had had within the last ten years had each one been the outcome of what were termed "scares." These scares, however, had proved to be merely the expression of public opinion. What the scaremongers demanded was actually what each Government had granted, and it was true, therefore, to say that public opinion up to this date had been driving the Admiralty to act up to its responsibilities. There had not been a single Cabinet that had said of its free will, "this is what we deem to be necessary for the safety of the country and therefore we demand it." What had happened invariably was, that a feeling of unrest in the country had gathered volume, the question had been taken up by influential journals, questions had been asked in the House, to which there had been plausible and evasive replies, until at last the Government, under pressure, had been obliged to come forward and admit that all that was demanded was required. When the present Administration first came into power they had shirked their responsibilities, and it was only when the feeling grew so strong that they conceded the first instalment of the present programme, which he thought was an admirable one. As to the Parliamentary control over these Estimates, Members, as a matter of fact, voted them blindly. The Government's sole idea was to get the money voted, and they never hesitated to use pressure to effect their purpose. The Twelve o'Clock Rule was frequently suspended, and they were expected to vote conscientiously in the interests of the country and their constituents at Two o'clock in the morning, when their physical condition was run down. A large portion of the Votes were usually left to the very eve of the Recess, and were permitted frequently to go through without debate, sometimes in sheer pity for the officials of the House. He was inclined to support the spirit of the Resolution. He understood, however, the hon. Member for Belfast thought that the naval officer who controlled these affairs should be called upon in time of war to take command.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said, he had not suggested or intended that.

*MR. KEARLEY did not see why these Estimates should not be referred to a Committee, who should sit upstairs. If a Committee, amateurs though they might be, were sitting upstairs, no doubt their judgment would become improved and strengthened by experience, and in a short time it would be found that the House could place more confidence in the judgment of that Committee than there would be in Estimates presented merely on the word of the Parliamentary representative of the Admiralty. It was most essential that the country should feel secure and know that, in the event of war breaking out, the Navy could confidently be relied upon. A war breaking out would mean not only that the country would have to be taxed to meet the heavy expenditure, but the price of our imported food supplies would immediately rise. Daily we drew necessaries from abroad, and the slightest interruption in these supplies meant a rapid rise in price. Much was said of the calamity of bread becoming scarce, but take even the commodity of butter. [An hon. MEMBER: "Not a necessity."] That depended upon the point of view from which it was considered; but it was an article having a large daily consumption among all classes. From Ireland, Denmark, France, Russia; indeed from all countries on the Continent and even from our Colonies we drew supplies, but with an interruption even only for two days, our people would have no butter to spread on their bread. Then our commerce would be heavily handicapped by a rise in the insurance rate, for a war risk would have to be paid for, and the amount of this would be settled according to the way in which the Navy was able to show its power to protect our trade routes, and remembering the burden of the rate on our commerce in the Great War, the importance of having swift cruisers to protect our trade routes could not be over-estimated. If the result were the transfer of trade to neutral vessels then there would be made an impression on the trade of this country which, if not permanent, it would require many years to recover from. Therefore, he thought the hon. Member had made out a fair case for a Department being set up, whether simply an Intelligence Department, culling from all available sources such information as it could, or whether an autocratic power, was not at the moment material; what the country demanded was that if called upon to enter on a war, we should do so with some assurance that it would be successfully conducted.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD - BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said, whatever might be the opinions of Members, there could be no doubt the hon. Member for Belfast had initiated a very interesting discussion. He thought the truth about the question rested in a middle view between two extremes—between what the hon. Member for Belfast would excuse him for calling the somewhat extreme view advocated by the Resolution, and the extremely official view of the Civil Lord. Midway between lay the just and wise view which had been exceedingly well put by the hon. Baronet the Member for Kingston, that there should be more strength and more security in the position of the First Sea Lord. The Civil Lord drew an ideal picture of a very strong First Sea Lord, who would dominate the Board of Admiralty in matters of purely Naval advice, and always have his way. That might be true of the present First Sea Lord—a distinguished officer, a very strong, capable man, who, by strength of character, had impressed his views on the existing Board to an extent that was more rare than it ought to be. It might often happen that such a man would be in the position of Second or Third Lord, and then the First Lord would not have such a strong position as now he seemed to have. He dissented altogether from the haphazard view expressed by the hon. Member for Cardiff, more extreme even than the official view, which took a most *couleur de rose* regard to the present system, though he agreed that a civilian Minister would be the best man to be at the head of the Board for Naval work as a whole. The country certainly ought to know the opinion of the Naval Advisers of the Crown, and this was a most important point that had been rather slurred over in the debate. What used to happen? It was matter of notoriety, and nobody who knew anything of Naval Administration in the past could deny it, that very often, and especially between the years 1870 and 1874, and from 1880 to 1883, the opinions of Naval Lords were not properly represented. If that had not been so, it would have been impossible for any Cabinet to have allowed the Navy to sink into the position it then did. The House would do well to concentrate its attention on Naval matters, and to secure publicity to the opinions of the Naval Advisers of the Crown. In the end, of course, the Ministry must be responsible, but the country ought to know whether the Parliamentary statements made from time to time really represented naval opinion. This time last year, there was extraordinary evidence of the importance of this. The Chancellor of the Exchequer largely influenced the Vote of the House on a critical Motion in regard to the necessity of increasing the strength of the Navy, by a statement entirely misleading. He then said that when he and the First Lord said the existing condition of things in respect to the British Navy was satisfactory, they spoke the opinion of the responsible professional advisers of that Department. The Government secured their majority, but it afterwards appeared that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not authorised to make any such statement. There was a revolt among the Naval Lords, and they threatened to resign unless the right hon. Gentleman publicly withdrew his statement. In consequence of that act of courage for which the Naval Lords deserved the greatest credit, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to come down and explain to the House that he only represented Naval opinion in regard to the first class battleships to be completed in the present financial year—a very different thing. To provide against the repetition of such an incident the House should be in possession of the opinion of the Sea Lords on the state of the Navy. The First Sea Lord, no doubt, and also his colleagues on the Board, made an admirable report year by year, demanding full provision for the Navy. But then often followed a message from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Naval Estimates must be cut down by so many millions or by so many hundreds of thousands of pounds, then the different Departments of the Admiralty has to set to work to reduce Estimates. That might be very unwise, but still the country would suppose that the Estimates, as presented to Parliament, represented the views of the Naval Lords of the Board, whereas they were in reality each different. His hon. Friends had done great public service in calling attention to this subject, which would not be settled until means were devised to let Parliament and the country know the real opinion of the Naval Advisers of the Crown on the existing condition of the Navy. The hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean had given figures to show that our Naval programme was deficient. It was a great misfortune that the beginning to build battleships was delayed until 18 months after the present Government came into office. So far as the programme proposed last year went, it was satisfactory with regard to battleships. But to contend that the Naval programme of the Government made this country fully a match for the two strongest Naval Powers was misleading. France and Russia were two or three battleships ahead of us in number if not in strength; and at the end of 1897, when the existing programme would be complete, they would be still more ahead of us, and bear the proportion (if his figures were correct) of 58 French and Russian battleships to 46 British. At the end of 1897 our Naval strength would not be equal to the combined forces of France and Russia unless the building of new battleships was commenced soon. What was wanted more than anything else was some plan by which the real view of the Naval Advisers of the Crown could, year by year, be known to Parliament and the country.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, he recognised that cogent arguments had been adduced to show that some improvement might be introduced into the Board of Admiralty, especially as to our methods of arrangement for war, and that there was a ground for anxiety in regard to the strategical distribution of our fleets in case of the sudden outbreak of war; yet he could not follow the hon. Member for Belfast in the terms and conclusion of his Motion. Of course Her Majesty's Government would say that the Estimates were based upon the considerations stated in the Resolution, and he did not know it could be proved they were not; under the admirable system by which they were called upon to vote large sums of money without receiving adequate information, they were entirely disqualified for asserting the contrary of what the Government would say. As to the Estimates being based on the advice of the Naval officer selected for the conduct of Naval operations, in case of war that officer ought to be at sea, and he could not be here to give advice. Was it suggested that we should first of all select a Naval officer to conduct operations, keep him at home to give advice in time of peace, and send him away as soon as war broke out? In that case, we should leave ourselves without advice at all. It had been suggested that there should be a reference to a Committee; but no Committee of the House could be competent to deal with questions of Naval strategy, which demanded much local and professional knowledge. The plan proposed was entirely inadequate. It came, he supposed, from the mental activity of gentlemen out of doors who had concerned themselves to various remedies for what they considered the faults in the management of the Navy. Plans of campaign had been drawn up, and they were told that that was done by foreign nations. With foreign nations the question was entirely a military question. Their enemies were well defined, their scene of operations was absolutely certain; and, consequently, it was possible to arrange beforehand an almost complete plan of campaign. England's plan of campaign would have to embrace the globe. How would it be possible, then, to frame one or two or even three different plans. Another difference was, that the conditions of naval warfare changed almost from day to day, and no plan of campaign made to-day would with any certainty be applicable to a war taking place six months hence. The idea was impossible. What did the proposal of the hon. Member for Belfast mean? It meant that the whole of the affairs of the Navy were to be put into the hands of one man. It was a one-man plan. Suppose the plan were adopted, would the one man appointed be exempt from criticism? Would not the hon. Member for Belfast and the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean lead him rather a lively time when the Estimates appeared? Captain Mahon, the great historian and modern strategist, had been quoted in support of this plan. He could not imagine a stronger enemy to it. Napoleon developed the one-man system to its greatest height. The whole history of the Napoleonic wars was a warning not to rely on the knowledge of one man. There never was in this world a greater genius in war than Napoleon, but could there ever have been a greater failure than when his fleet came into conflict with the naval forces of this country? It was essentially a British board of Admiralty that met the concentrated power of France in the hands of one man and defeated it. It was proposed that the one man should be a man selected for naval operations in case of war. What guarantee was there that that officer would be actually ready or even alive to conduct those operations when necessity arose? He supposed that, if during the last three years the Admiralty had looked for a man to conduct operations of war, they would have selected Admiral Tryon or Admiral Hornby, but both of them have passed to their long rest. When the time for actual operations came, the Admiralty would have found themselves without either of those officers. It was proposed that this Lord High Admiral should be an absolute and complete dictator, that he should dictate to the Government what Estimates they should bring in, what number of battleships they should build, and, in short, that he should be complete master of the Board of Admiralty. Some attempt had already been made to approximate to this one-man system. There was once a First Lord who arranged that one of the Naval Lords should be responsible for the men and another for the ships, while he himself was to be responsible for the whole. A question arose as to the building of ships, and the First Lord called on the Naval Lord, who was responsible for the ships, and argued the question with him. The Naval Lord who was responsible for the men came in, and there was a remarkable difference between the two Naval Lords. The effect was that the Naval Lord responsible for the ships used such language that the First Lord ordered him out of the room, and, when he was gone, settled the question of the ships with the Naval Lord who was responsible for the men. Now, he yielded to no one in his interest in the Navy, or in his desire to see the Service flourish, and to satisfy every legitimate requirement of men and officers; but, after all, the Navy was but an instrument to secure the civil government of the country by civil ministers, and this instrument was one that must inevitably be used by and remain in the hands of civil and not professional officers. It was to the Civil Ministry chosen by the House that the House looked for the conduct of the affairs of the country, and to use the Navy as an instrument; and he thought the House would never consent to place the Navy in the hands of a naval officer. He recognised the good intention and patriotic purpose of the hon. Member who brought forward the Motion, and others who supported him; but he could not but see that theirs was an impracticable proposal which could not possibly work, and which, if it did work, would have this disastrous effect—that it would release the Government from all responsibility, and make it possible for them to plead the dictum of their Lord High Admiral, and come down to the House and justify their action by the advice they had received from him. It would further deprive the House of all practical power over Ministers. The Board of Admiralty might have its defects, but he believed it was practically the best worked department in the country; and he did most distinctly say that any improvement did not lie in the direction of relieving Her Majesty's Ministers of responsibility, or placing their responsibility in the hands of a single individual. For these reasons he should vote against the Resolution.

*Mr. E. T. GOURLEY (Sunderland) observed that, by accepting the proposal before the House, they would reverse the policy adopted 25 or 26 years ago, when Mr. Childers was First Lord of the Admiralty—namely, that the responsibility for the Naval policy of the country should rest with the Government of the day, represented by the First Lord. He was not prepared to transfer that responsibility from the Government to the Board of Admiralty, for if that were done the Government and the First Lord would be able to shelter themselves against attack whenever mistakes were committed by saying it was the Admiralty. He should like to hear of an agreement between the War Office and the Admiralty with regard to the duties devolving upon them separately and jointly both in times of peace as well as in the event of war. In case of hostilities the two Services would have to co-operate, but one never heard of their co-operating in time of peace. He trusted that the Resolution before them would be rejected *in toto.*

*ADMIRAL FIELD said, that he was not in sympathy with the Resolution, which did not seem to have received much support. The hon. Member who had just sat down said that there was a want of co-operation between the Army and the Navy. He maintained, on the contrary, that, whenever they had been asked to co-operate, there had been no ground for fault finding. Was not Lord Wolseley perfectly satisfied with the co-operation between the two Services in Egypt? Replying to the speeches of the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean and of other hon. Members, he asserted that, if there were defects in the present system of Naval administration, they were purely political and not professional defects. His brother officers would do all that the Service and the country could require of them if they were given a free hand. But he agreed with the hon. Member for King's Lynn and others that that House was rightly determined to have the principal voice in, and the principal control over, all matters dealing with Naval and Military efficiency, especially matters of expenditure. The House would have a Minister in Parliament—and, for preference, on the Front Bench opposite—who was responsible for the efficiency of Naval administration. That House was Britain in essence, and therefore should be supreme. That being so, they must accept the defects of the system. Under an absolute Government there might be a perfect system of Naval administration, but that would not be possible under a system like ours so long as there was a civilian at the head of it. The present system was, however, necessary, and the Navy accepted it loyally. Naval men were completely loyal to their Parliamentary chief, to which ever Party he might belong. All politicians who had presided at the Admiralty would bear testimony to that. Then, what became of the resolution? There was no bottom in it. It was for Parliament to remedy any political defects in the Naval administration, and no one had the right to speak of those defects as if they were Naval defects. He understood that the hon. Member for Belfast had disclaimed the meaning which had been ascribed by every sensible man to the last part of his Resolution, and that the hon. Member said now that he only meant that the First Sea Lord ought to advise the First Lord and the Government in case of war. If that was all that the hon. Member meant, the Resolution was not necessary, because the Hartington Commission had already laid it down that the First Sea Lord was to be the principal adviser of the First Lord. Acting upon that recommendation, the noble Lord the Member for Middlesex (Lord George Hamilton) made, he believed, a change in the duties of the First Sea Lord, relieving him of some minor administrative work, so as to give him more time for the study of large Naval problems. Whatever Naval operations might be necessary in the event of war, it would not, however, devolve upon the Admiralty to initiate them. It would be made a Cabinet question, and the Prime Minister and his colleagues would have to consult with the most distinguished Naval men whom they could find. But having once set the Admirals loose, in command of their respective fleets, they must trust them to do their duty. Therefore, there was nothing in the Resolution that really called for serious comment. At the present time, whatever may have been the case in the past, the Government, like the late Government, were doing their duty, being well sustained by public opinion. Reference had been made to the necessity for a good harbour at Dover, but if anybody was responsible for the neglect of Dover harbour, it was not naval men, who had clamoured for it ever since 1844; it was this House which had prevented that work being carried out. Both Governments were to blame in this matter, but not the professional advisers at the Admiralty. Therefore, it was not fair to speak as if there was great defect in the Admiralty system. The system was all right if they only let it have fair play. Where it failed was when this House interfered. Now that they found there were torpedo stations on the other side of the channel everywhere, they had come to realise that something must be done on the east coast of England. How often, when naval men at the Board of Admiralty had made up their minds as to what was necessary for the country, had they been defeated by the Ministers at the Treasury! Too much power was given to the Treasury. These reforms must be introduced. The Treasury cavilled at every demand made upon it by the War Office or the Navy. They insisted in having a voice in every trifling detail. If they would take away some of the power possessed by the Treasury, and transfer some of the power of expenditure to the First Lord of the Admiralty and his Board, and to the Secretary of State for War and his Council, they would do a great deal to promote efficiency in both branches. He did not think the Committee on the Estimates had been of essential benefit to the public service. They had wasted a great deal of official time, which would have been much better employed at the Admiralty and the War Office. He did not think, therefore, they were likely to see the French system of administration adopted by referring these matters to Committees upstairs. The hon. Member who spoke last launched a great deal of praise at Mr. Childers and his wonderful reforms. Naval men did not share these views. They thought it one of the greatest disasters that the right hon. Gentleman was ever called upon to preside over the Navy. The right hon. Gentleman was foolish enough to hoist the Admiralty Flag on one occasion and sail the Fleet. He, himself, served in the Fleet on that occasion, and knew all about it, and if he had only known the opinion of the Officers of the Fleet at that exhibition, he would not have been flattered, for a more foolish and ridiculous attempt for a civilian First Lord he could not conceive. If anything had happened to the Fleet on that occasion, with the Admiralty Flag flying, the right hon. Gentlemon would have been responsible. Were hon. Gentlemen satisfied with that? As a matter of fact, care was taken that he should not be responsible, for they had a very clever Admiral in command of the Fleet on the occasion; but still, it was a degrading thing to the Admiral that his own Flag was not flying. He shared the belief that the Admiralty was the best administered of all the public Departments. It was honestly administered by capable and distinguished men, who had the confidence of the profession at large. No one had suggested that they should get rid of Parliamentary control, and therefore they must accept the policy of naval colleagues to the First Lord, which meant the responsibility of the Government as a whole. He should be glad, however, if the recommendation of the Hartington Committee were adopted, and that the First Sea Lord should be called upon to prepare a Report on the state of the Navy annually, and lay it on the Table of the House. He knew that would never be done. Naval men desired to have it done because they would then get an honest expression of opinion as to the real state of the Navy. He considered that the First and Second Sea Lords ought to have Naval Officers of rank as Private Secretaries. When they called upon an Admiral to command the Fleet, they gave him a fine staff of officers. But when that same Officer was put into a superior position as First Sea Lord, he had not a single professional Officer to assist him, or upon whom he could lean for a wonderful amount of details. [An hon. Member: There is the Intelligence Department.] Of course, if a Captain was drawn from the Intelligence Department for this purpose, that met his point. As regarded the main system of administration, he believed that, of the kind, it was about the best that the mind of man could invent for the control of a great branch of the service like the Navy, and under these circumstances, and after the Debate that had taken place, he hoped the Amendment would be withdrawn.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER remarked that, in view of the acquiescence of the Civil Lord of the Admiralty to the first part of the Amendment, and the assurance he had given as to professional advisers, he would ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Objection was taken to the withdrawal of the Amendment, and it was formally negatived without a Division.

*Mr. W. ALLAN (Gateshead) remarked that with regard to this question of the needs of the Navy and its fitness for war, he looked at it from a different point of view to most of the hon. Members who had spoken. He asked himself what was, after all, the true condition of a vessel in war time; what should the vessel be? A great deal of money was voted last year, and a great deal would be voted this year, for ships of war. He did not hold the value of a ship to be exclusively in its armour, in its guns, or in its men, but he held that the sole value of a man-of-war as a fighting machine, lay in the boilers. When the boilers failed, the ship stopped. On the boilers of a man-of-war depended everything. Boilers ought to be designed and fitted into their ships on the basis of the following three points: safety, simplicity, and efficiency. A ship, no matter how costly it might be, or how efficiently commanded and manned, if at all weakened in the chief motor of her driving power, namely the boilers, would be practically helpless. The speed of every vessel depended entirely on the boilers. The great weakness of their Navy lay simply in the fact that there was a deficiency in the boiler power on board the vessels which was altogether inadequate to give the speed calculated for. For a long time the Admiralty had been floundering, and been in a mist as to what boilers to put in the vessels. They had been vainly striving, as it were, to put two horses into one stall. The boilers they used were so small that they had been compelled to adopt surreptitious and barbaric methods to obtain the steam power required. They had been trying for years to get one horsepower out of one and a-half square feet of heating surface. He had, in his time, built a few boilers, and engined many vessels, but he could never get one horsepower under three feet of heating surface. The methods adopted by the Admiralty had placed every ship in the British Navy at this moment in an absolutely useless position for full steam speed. In attempting to solve this problem of getting larger efficiency of steaming power out of the ships, they had not followed the well-known aim of all shipowners, which was to make provision for ample steaming power. The Admiralty, therefore, had been driven to the necessity of endeavouring to get the requisite amount of steam out of small boilers by means of a forced draught instead of by the natural draught. By the creation of this unnatural draught, as we might term it, they got something greater, but at what expanse! It meant the absolute destruction of the boilers within the vessel. Under an unnatural draught, the boilers had a strain put upon them which they were altogether too small to bear, and they became practically useless. There were three vessels, the *Blake*, the *Vulcan*, and the *Blenheim*, in the construction of which a large amount of money had been spent. What condition were they in to-day? Their boilers were done for, and £120,000 were now asked for to re-boiler vessels which were not yet four years old. Was not that a squandering of national money? These three vessels were tremendously puffed up in the papers, but what had become of them now? Where were they to-day? They were lame ducks, and could not be sent to sea, for the boilers had completely failed. How long would the Admiralty pursue this suicidal system? How long would they be blind to the fact that they were endeavouring to get more power out of the boilers than the boilers could safely give? He warned the Admiralty and the House that every ship to which they applied the system would turn out to be useless when she was most wanted—she would never be able to pursue an enemy, or to run away from one. It was not too much to say that, on this question of boilers, the safety of the Empire depended. Well, locomotive boilers had failed, and the Admiralty had been driven to the adoption of water tube boilers. Remembering the deplorable experience with these boilers, it was astonishing that the Admiralty should have resorted to them at all, especially when better results might be obtained by a safer, simpler, and more economical method. He was dealing, not with individuals, but with principles, and his object in bringing the matter forward was the safety of our ships—the desire that our ships should be, in every sense of the term, first-class fighting machines. Why were the Admiralty using water-tube boilers? Because the French were doing so. Their danger and inefficiency had been already proved in this country. In several instances the water tube boiler, of different matters, had been tried in the vessels of the Mercantile Marine, and it had always failed. Indeed, he challenged anyone to mention a case where those boilers had not failed. Yet the Admiralty officials had adopted this description of boiler on the slight recommendation of them by a French engineer, who was sent to report upon the water tube boilers in one of the vessels of the Messageries Maritime; but did that engineer also report the mishaps that occurred to the boilers, the amount of repairs they needed, the number of spare tubes which it was necessary to carry in case of failure, and the cost of the great consumption of coal they involved? Still, on that Report the Admiralty were plunging into water tube boilers for several of the splendid cruisers that were now being built. He had the most serious doubt of the safety of those boilers. It should be remembered that a water tube boiler had a water pressure inside the tube, and in case of the slightest flaw that pressure tended to open the tube with serious risk of explosion; whereas, the ordinary boiler had the water pressure outside, and the compression tended to keep a flaw tight. The cases of fatal explosions with the water tube boiler were numerous. There was the case of the French vessel *Saracen*; one tube only burst and killed eight men in the stoke-hole. The case of the *Sharpshooter*, at the trial trips at Devonport, was another glaring instance of the failure of the water tube boiler; she broke down six times in her series of trials. Yet that was the vessel from which the Admiralty raised the data for the adoption of water tube boilers. The boilers might be all very well so long as pure fresh water was being used for them, but the moment salt water got into them, there was a terrible danger of explosion. He should like to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether he, in his official position, had had no experience of fatal explosions connected with the use of those boilers. There was the case of the torpedo boat *Sturgeon*, built at Barrow, and designed to run 27 knots an hour. The designs were prepared by the Admiralty, and every one of the tubes were severely tested. She went to sea; one of the tubes soon gave out, there was an explosion and an engineer and one man were scalded in the stoke-hole and afterwards died. At the coroner's inquest the managing engineers at Barrow condemned the tube boilers as dangerous. What was the result to-day? Shipbuilding firms at Barrow regarded those boilers as so dangerous that, when the vessels fitted with them made their trial trips, they insured the lives of the engineers and stokers in £400 and promised £2 a week in case of partial disablement. They had absolutely guaranteed the lives of these men. Would the Government guarantee the lives of the engineers on their torpedo boats? How many boats had the Government got with similar boilers at this moment? But what were the Admiralty doing? They had decided that copper was a bad thing, and though they passed the original designs and specifications, they had obliged the contractors to substitute steel tubes at their own expense. Why, in the name of equity, had the Admiralty done so? But he would go further. Everyone had heard of the *Hornet* and of her performances—how she could steam 27 to 30 knots an hour. Where was she now? Lying in a corner of Portsmouth Dockyard, with every boiler out of her—boilers only 12 months old. Who was to pay for that? They heard of money being squandered. If they had a return of the repairs executed on vessels under 12 months old, they would find that hundreds of thousands of pounds were squandered in experiments. He asserted as an engineer of nearly half-a-century's experience, that the Belleville boiler was a dangerous boiler. And it was not an economical boiler; for, compared with the ordinary boiler, it required coal in the proportion of 40 tons to 28. That meant in a warship that they had a shorter steaming range, and that they had to carry far more men to put the coal on board. He could not understand why the officials of the Admiralty pursued such a course. This was not the engineering of Great Britain—the engineering of James Watt, and George Stephenson; it was the engineering of some interested and belated Frenchman. Britain wanted boilers that would steam night and day through storm and sunshine, and we had not got them, nor anything like them in our present warships. He could not see wherein the advantage of the tubular boilers lay. They were not lighter; they did not occupy less space. On the other hand they showed less safety, less efficiency, and greater complexity. In the *Powerful* and the *Terrible* they had 48 tubular boilers. They were each capable of withstanding a pressure of 250 pounds; but that must be reduced to 150 pounds when it went to the engine, and if anything went wrong with the reducing valve, the engine would break down. That of itself was a strong point in condemnation of the water tube boilers, Would the Admiralty ever believe that ample boiler power was the only fighting value of ships they built? What was the use of guns if the boilers were not to be depended upon? Who was responsible for that state of things? Was it the First Lord? No; he was not an engineer. Was it the Secretary to the Admiralty? No; he was not an engineer. Was it the Civil Lord? No; he was not an engineer; he knew nothing about engines. Was it the Chief Constructor of the Navy? No; he was only a shipbuilder, though a very clever one. He wanted the Civil Lord to tell the House upon whose shoulders rested the responsibility for the water tube boilers fitted into the torpedo-catchers and other vessels of the Royal Navy. That was the question which he wanted an answer to. It was a mixed-up affair, but he was determined to get at the bottom of it and find out who was really responsible for this engineering. He bade the Admiralty pause before embarking on such a huge experiment. He implored them, as an engineer, to test these boilers for themselves before fitting them into their two grandest cruisers. He would like the boilers to be first fitted into a second-class cruiser, and then have them tried at sea—not merely for a couple of hours' run, with a few newspaper correspondents on board, but running at sea till the coal was exhausted; and then, after taking in a fresh supply at some coaling station, to steam home again. Let this be done in the presence of competent experts; let the latter make a full report upon the boilers, and let that report be laid upon the Table of the House. Hon. Members would then be in a position to judge. The Admiralty owed that duty not only to themselves, but to the country and to tho men on board those ships. If these boilers were so commendable, how came it that no shipowner in the House had adopted them? There was, he asserted, not a shipowner in Great Britain who would put into two such splendid cruisers as the *Powerful* and *Terrible* 48 water tube boilers apiece. Then, why should the Admiralty do it? Simply from the fact that the money was found for them to squander. He warned the Admiralty that they would, if they persisted in their present course, be landed in endless expense, unless, indeed, some terrible disaster overtook those vessels such as happened to the *Victoria*. He had considered it to be his duty, not only to his constituents, but to the House and to the country, to put forward his views on the present occasion. He did not wonder that the Admiralty could not get engineers to go on their ships, though they were advertising for men in all towns in the Midlands. Why? Because it was well-known to engineers throughout the country that the poor men at Barrow had to get a life-policy before they would go on boats fitted with water tube boilers. The Government should no longer wonder why they could not get men for their ships when they put such dangerous fittings into them. He considered it a duty which he owed to the Admiralty themselves thus to speak his mind on a subject which was fraught with the gravest import to the strength and efficiency of our Navy, and to the credit of British engineering.

MR. A. B. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) remarked, that he was sure the House had listened with great pleasure to the speech just delivered. The hon. Member for Gateshead had dealt with a technical subject, and one very difficult to bring home to lay minds, in a most picturesque and interesting manner; and he was sure that the words which had been uttered by him were weighty ones, and well worthy of serious and anxious consideration. He only regretted that the hon. Member had not been present when the Estimates for the construction of the *Powerful* and *Terrible* were first brought up. On that occasion he expressed an opinion on these water tube boilers, not certainly on the lines of the hon. Member for Gateshead, but anxiously pressing on the Government to have them first tested on a smaller and less important vessel; and, as a shipowner and a layman, he was certainly of opinion that the Government ought not to have put these boilers into our two biggest cruisers till adequate trials had been first made in a smaller vessel. An engineer officer was sent out as a passenger by one of the boats to see how these boilers worked, and he made a very valuable report; but the data were not of the kind on which the Admiralty could embark with experiments. The only advantage was that they lend themselves to be placed in a ship, and stood more conveniently than ordinary cylindrical boilers. He should like to say that one of the last actions of his noble Friend, when chief of the Admiralty, was to order a torpedo boat with a water tube boiler for experimental purposes. The order was given to Thorneycrofts, and they were given a free hand. They guaranteed that the boiler would be efficient for at least three years. He thought that was a proper course to take, and it was right that the Admiralty should watch all new inventions. The Member for Gateshead had made a sweeping attack upon the boilers generally in Her Majesty's ships, and if that attack were passed over it might cause alarm. There was no doubt that at one time there was an inclination to cut down the size of boilers, and force them to give larger horse-power than—as had since been proved—was practically possible. They had then at the Admiralty probably the most able theoretical engineer that ever lived, but his great forte was theory rather than practice. His great desire was to unduly cut down engines and boilers in order that a vessel might hope to be propelled at a higher rate of speed and built on finer lines. The result of that policy was, that several vessels, the *Blenheim*, the *Blake*, and the *Vulcan*, had not proved satisfactory. The boilers would not stand the forced draught for which they were originally designed. When the Naval Defence Act vessels were laid down it was decided that the boiler power of those vessels should be as much as possible on the lines adopted by the mercantile navy. He ventured to say there would be no trouble found in the ships built by his noble Friend so far as boiler power was concerned. That evening the discussion had been principally directed to the discussion of the principle of Admiralty Administration. It is not the general custom to range over the Estimates on the Motion that the Speaker do leave the Chair, but experience for the last few years in connection with the Naval Estimates led him to come to the conclusion that this was about the only real chance that Members of the House would have of taking a general and wide glance of the Naval Policy of the country. There had been a general acknowledgment on the part of those who had spoken that the Estimates presented showed that the Government appreciated the needs of the Navy. Well, he quite agreed in those remarks, but he should like, in passing, to point out this fact—the expenditure in the last three years, including this year, amounted to £12,903,000. In the last three years, under his noble Friend, the expenditure amounted to £14,987,000. Allusion had been made to what had been provided for the standard aimed at. On a previous occasion he had ventured to call the attention of the House to the necessity of having a standard. In 1888, before the Naval Defence Act was determined upon, a standard of requirement was established by competent Naval Officers; and on that standard the Naval Defence Act was laid down. Gauged by that standard this country was four first-class and nine second-class battleships less than the number which the professional advisers in 1888 thought we ought to possess in comparison with the fleets of two other Powers. He regretted that in the present Estimates no provision whatever was made for battleships, the only provision made being for cruisers. He estimated that the cost of the programme under construction on April 1 would represent a capital value of £13,500,000, that the additional new programme which was submitted to Parliament would cost £4,000,000, making next year a total value of shipping under construction of £17,500,000. Up to April 1 next £5,370,000 would have been expended towards the completion of £17,500,000 worth of shipping, leaving £12,130,000 to be provided for in future years. Towards this sum £5,400,000 were taken in the Estimates of 1895–6, leaving a liability on future years of £6,730,000. When was this liability likely to mature? His opinion was that it would mature in 1896–7; but he regretted to say that there was a tendency shown in the present Estimates to relapse into the old system of rather too slow construction. A few ships had been constructed at a remarkably rapid rate. The *Majestic*, for example, was laid down in February, 1894, and on April 1 1896, there would be only £24,500 left to be expended to complete the ship, or barely one month's work. The *Hannibal* was laid down in May, 1894, though it was not proposed to finish her until 1898–9, the construction covering something like five financial years. The *Renown* was another ship with which slow progress was being made. It was laid down in February, 1893; she would be launched in 1896 and completed in 1897-8, or four years in the course of construction. The *Powerful* was not to be completed until 1897–8, although the vessel was well begun last year. He suggested, therefore, that it was far better to lay down fewer vessels and urge on their completion than to put down a larger number and not spend as much money as could be spent in order to complete them at the earliest time. Again, the change in Vote X. as between last year and this was very remarkable. Last year certain new works were proposed in Vote X., and £435,000 was voted for a commencement. The liability thrown on future years for the completion of those works was to be £4,500,000, and it was to be extended over some ten years. This year was to have borne £704,000, but he found that these works had entirely disappeared from the Estimates; and he gathered from the First Lord's statement that the balance required for completion was going to be obtained by loan. He had no objection to that policy, but it came curiously from those who had condemned in wholesale fashion the late Board of Admiralty for spreading the cost of some work on ships over five years. Practically, this was a loan for dredging and other works, which it was idle to attempt to distinguish, in respect of permanency, from those which the late Government proposed. The late Government expended money over Portsmouth Yard, coaling stations, and barracks out of its year's revenue; and it might just as well, when it brought in the Naval Defence Act, have borrowed money for those purposes. It was desirable to bring out emphatically and clearly that the present Government were not only following in the footsteps of their predecessors, but were even going further. Next, as to the dimensions of the vessels which it was proposed to build. All shipbuilding authorities knew that length was a great advantage at sea. A vessel having a comparatively moderate beam and good length was much more easily and economically driven than a short and broad vessel. It was suggested that the new vessels were to be improved *Talbots* —a vessel which was 350 feet long and 53 feet beam—but their beam was to be increased to 57 feet, while their length was reduced to 320 feet. No doubt the Civil Lord would be able to explain why this apparently retrograde step had been taken. Last year he called attention to the serious position in which the manning of the Navy would be by reason of the large increase in the number of vessels, and he urged the desirability of drawing more closely the ties between the mercantile marine and the Royal Navy. He was very sorry indeed to see in the First Lord's statement that, in respect of the Royal Naval Reserve,

> "the number is already filled, and they have had to refuse applicants."

The Reserve was growing in popularity, and there was an increasing desire on the part of seamen to enter it. The Government should take advantage of the circumstances of the time, and increase the Vote in order to let all men in the mercantile marine who wished to join the Reserve do so. The cost was comparatively little. The number enrolled was 25,000, and the annual cost was a little more than £200,000. The number of men for the Navy had been raised to the large total of 88,000; but in connection with this manning vote the vote for non-effective services, though passed over casually year after year, had a most important bearing. This vote had grown from about £1,200,000 in 1865 to £2,100,000 to-day. Looking at the number in the service 30 years ago, and seeing that their cost on the pension list to-day was £2,100,000, he could not but think that in 20 years' time the 88,000 men now in the Navy would increase the non-effective vote to £3,000,000. He would urge upon the Government the desirability of encouraging more largely the enlistment of men from the Mercantile Marine. If these men were first enlisted as boys permanently in the service they cost us something like £66 per head per annum, the cost of the boys before enlistment being £30 per head. These boys, too, made better bluejackets, and were more amenable to discipline than men who had not been so trained; and he hoped that some day the number of training ships for boys might be increased, and that some arrangement might be made by which the boys could be drafted off for a time, subject to conditions, on board merchant vessels, and afterwards enter the Navy.

*Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington) said, he would call the attention of the House very briefly to what was the most marked feature of the Estimates. In the statement which had been circulated by the First Lord, explaining the Estimates, it was said that the application which was made to the House was a serious and large one. The facts were, that for the Naval Estimates of this year £1,330,000 more was demanded than for those of last year, and something like £4,750,000 more than the Estimates of two years ago. The total amounted to about 19 millions, or, including the provision made for certain loans and deferred payment, 20 millions. Ten years ago, in 1885, the total amount was 10½ millions, so that the amount had nearly doubled within ten years. He thought these facts were of a serious nature, and should be considered by the House. When this Parliament assembled it was not with the intention of dealing particularly with the Navy, but with another great question, connected with domestic policy. But somewhere about 1893 a scare was raised in the newspapers, and many Members on that side of the House had hoped that the Government would present a firm front to the extravagant demands which were made then in regard to this service. But it did not prove to be so. This was the third of the Naval scares which we had had within the last ten years; the first was in 1884–5, ten years before that period the Naval Estimates having stood at exactly the same amount. In the case of the two former scares, the Estimates did not rise again until a few years afterwards. In 1884–5 the Estimates suddenly went up by about two millions; then they were steady for four years. In 1889 exactly the same thing happened, the Estimates going up by about 2½ millions, and then remaining steady. The result of the scare in 1893, which he thought was the worst of the three, was that the Estimates went up by 3½ millions, but now the very next year, they were asked for nearly 1½ million more. He thought that, under the circumstances, the Government ought to give a full and complete defence of the very large demand they were making for this service. Was it our retention of Egypt which made it necessary that the cost of the Navy should be doubled? If so, the country should know what it was costing us. But this might not be the real explanation, and if it was not, he thought the House of Commons ought to be taken into the confidence of the Government, and the House ought to hear exactly why it was that this serious demand was made now, when times were so bad. This was the first time, he believed, that the Estimates of the Government for the Navy had exceeded the amount asked of the House for the Army. He hoped the House would exercise its undoubted right, and severely criticise the proposals before them. It was sometimes argued as a cause for this increase that a very strong Navy was necessary for the protection of our commerce, but he would point out that our commerce was not any larger this year than it was in 1885, so that if the Naval expenditure were looked on as a sort of insurance on the commerce, in 1885 the insurance was 1½ per cent., and now it had increased to 3 per cent. He did not think that in the long run the commerce of this country would flourish under these huge armaments, for other countries would not submit to having trade thrust down their throats in this way. A more discreet policy, a wiser course, would be, instead of adopting this aggressive attitude to assume a more conciliatory disposition towards other nations. Was it necessary to have such a huge Navy for the protection of the United Kingdom? He doubted if the growth of our great Naval armaments made the country more secure. More difficult was it to land a hostile force in the country now, than ever it had been. At the present time, with the exception of the unfortunate war in the far East, there was among all nations every effort made to maintain peace, and nothing threatened that state of peace but the maintenance of huge armed forces by some Continental Powers. Should we imitate the mistakes of those Powers which we so constantly denounced?

By increasing our arnaments beyond the necessities of the time, we withheld support from that policy of peace which it was for the interest of all nations to preserve. All were glad when a difference between ourselves and another friendly Power was settled by arbitration. He was reminded that the award might not be paid; but he took a more hopeful view, and believed that that friendly Power would hesitate once and twice before it disregarded the important decision given. The House should by all means endeavour to encourage a policy by which nations should settle international differences without having recourse to the arbitrament of war. Lastly, he asked where was this expenditure to stop? One hon. Member declared his opinion that we should be as strong as any two nations, and others he thought insisted that we should be as strong as any other three or four nations. But what was the limit? Was it not a perilous, ruinous contest—the increase of our strength stimulating efforts in other Powers and increasing difficulties to contend against? We had now reached an expenditure of 20 millions, and why not make it 30 or more? The seas are wide, and it would take many ships to cover them. A very serious duty led the House to severely scrutinise these constant demands; and that duty neglected, the time would come when this country would have to retrace with slow and painful steps, the course adopted in a somewhat thoughtless manner.

Mr. JOHN PENN (Lewisham) thought the remarks of the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. Allan) should not pass without reference. It was an impressive speech the hon. Member delivered, and if it went forth unchallenged it might tend to spread alarm altogether unfounded. The hon. Member criticised severely the whole of the boilers in Her Majesty's Service. He said the ships were under-boilered, but his (Mr. Penn's) impression was absolutely the reverse, and he did not think that, as at present designed, enough was got out of the boilers. Of the several vessels the hon. Member represented as having broken down he had no knowledge, but would be astonished to find the hon. Member's statement correct. The hon. Member went on to speak of the water tube boilers, and rather led the House to believe that these were nothing but so many death-traps. He admitted at once that it would have been a wiser policy if the Admiralty had made somewhat larger experiments before adopting these boilers on a large scale. The First Lord, in his statement, said:—

> "The fitting of new boilers of the Belleville type on the torpedo gunboat *Sharpshooter*, in lieu of her original boilers of locomotive type, has been completed, and they have been tested on board, during prolonged trials, with good results. The ship has been attached to the Channel Squadron, to obtain further experience of the working of this type of boiler under sea-going conditions."

It would have been wiser to have had larger experience of these boilers before adopting them for the *Terrible* and the *Powerful*, and the cruisers about to be laid down, into which, he understood, Belleville boilers were to be fitted. But that was altogether a different matter to supposing that these boilers were going to blow up and burn or boil all the men in charge of them. These boilers had now been running for several years, and had they been fraught with such danger that would have been discovered, and the boilers would have been condemned long ago. They would not be used so largely as undoubtedly they were. His personal view of the water-tight boiler was, that it had considerable advantages, inasmuch as steam could be got up quicker. It was lighter, and it stowed with a less heat space than the ordinary boiler. The disadvantages appeared to be that it was not known how long the boiler would last. This required testing. He knew perfectly well that where boilers had superheaters attached the superheaters were not filled to last for a long time, and he was not certain whether these boilers would be found to bear wear and tear to the same extent as the old-fashioned round boilers. With regard to the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, he was glad to see a large increase in the men of the Royal Navy. He had interested himself chiefly in the engineer staff. This had been largely increased, but he doubted whether it had been increased to the extent that would be necessary if our ships were called upon to do what they would undoubtedly have to do if the country were suddenly plunged into war. The number of engineer officers appeared to be decidedly small in comparison not only with the large number of ships in which they would have to serve, but the complexity and diversity of the machinery with which they would be charged. He had several times urged that, although these vessels in the Royal Navy could do their work perfectly well and satisfactorily at the present time, under ordinary conditions, the conditions would be altogether different in time of war. He had also urged, and he urged it now more strongly, that they would never know exactly where they were until the captains of the ships were ordered to run their ships at full speed. The Estimates were framed in a broad and commendable spirit, but there was one item in them which gave him much concern. He noticed that there was £59,000 less required for coal during the coming than during the past year. He believed they would never know adequately how their engine-rooms were manned until the vessels were driven at full speed. The fact was, that admirals and captains of the ships were afraid to order the ships to go at full speed, and to make long full-speed trials, because of the expense for coal. If this was the case the sooner it was altered the better. The ships should be driven more frequently and for longer periods at full speed. They had to run to dockyards for repairs which ought to be executed on board, the ship being thus kept longer at sea. Then there was another point, in connection with the engine-room staff, which he would like to touch upon, and that was with regard to the engine-room artificers. From the Estimates it appeared that 40 assistant engineers were to be added for temporary service. This was a step in the right direction. But he would like to point out (without the slightest disparagement to the officers who had joined) that under the old system—not many years ago—an engineer student was required to serve six years in the ships, and that when he was discharging his duties he was brought into intimate contact not only with the manipulative use of tools but taught sea-going work from start to finish. Now these 40 assistant engineers for temporary service were from private firms, and they had had in some cases only three and a half years' experience; and this, as compared with the older engineers, was altogether inadequate. The efficiency of the engine-room largely depended upon the excellence of the engine-room artificers, who were a most valuable body of men. It seemed to him that some concession should be made to them—though he spoke with diffidence on the question of rank, having an old-fashioned respect for all deck discipline—and that the best of them should be promoted to warrant rank. Such a prospect would, he thought, have many beneficial results, because at present they practically had nothing to look forward to. If warrant rank were held out to them, it would not only attract the best class of mechanics to the service, but make those already in it strive to attain that rank which was the great ambition of that branch of the service. There had been a number of modifications in regard to accommodation for engine-room artificers, and he was glad to see that the Admiralty had paid some attention to their wishes and requests in that direction. He had not intended to intervene in the Debate; but his object in doing so was to allay as far as possible any alarmist fears which might have been occasioned with regard to dangers of water-tube boilers.

Sir F. H. EVANS (Southampton) was sure the House would agree that the speech of the hon. Member for Gateshead was an interesting and sympathetic one, but they were apt to be carried away with their feelings when questions affecting men whose lives were passed in danger were raised. And while not wishing to minimise that danger, he could not help thinking that the hon. Member's sympathy had somewhat run away with him. Water passing through the tubes no doubt made boilers more dangerous, but that was a difficulty which, he felt sure, engineers would overcome. Forced draught had been referred to, and when used properly he regarded it as most serviceable. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Liverpool, had pointed out to him the advantages of forced draught in the case of a vessel which had to proceed at a high rate of speed between certain points of her voyage, and between others could slow down, time not pressing. He was glad to hear the case of merchant seamen mentioned. In the company with which he was associated, they had a large number of seamen who had been in their employ for upwards of 20 and 30 years, and it was a pity that they did not receive some encouragement from the Navy. They would form a most valuable reserve; their long service showed them to be men of good character, and their sea service made them just the class of men the Navy wanted, and he hoped some measure might be adopted by which they could be called upon if required. He fully endorsed the remarks of the hon. Member for Lewisham, with regard to engine-room artificers. They were an excellent body of men, and holding out to them the prospect of warrant rank would have beneficial results in more than one direction.

MR. G. WYNDHAM (Dover) said, he had been commissioned by his constituents to ask a question about Dover Harbour. There was a paragraph in the printed statement which had given great satisfaction, because it declared that the construction of a national harbour at Dover would be an inestimable boon both to commerce and the Royal Navy. It was added that, immediately after the first Navy vote was passed, a Bill would be presented providing for work at a certain number of places; but Dover was not named among the places to be put in the schedule of the Bill; and the question was why it was omitted. It did not appear that Dover would benefit beyond a promise on paper, which was the echo of a pious opinion expressed by the Commission of 1844, since which date nothing had been done.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby): I brought in a vote in 1886, and I was defeated.

MR. WYNDHAM said, he would not trace the fluctuations that had occurred since 1844, but he would urge considerations in favour of the work being proceeded with at once. It would give hope to thousands of the unemployed. Then the scheme was in the nature of an insurance for both our commerce and the Navy; and in private life, when you had once determined that insurance was expedient, you did not postpone the matter indefinitely, but effected the insurance at once. If this work were to be done by annual Bill, there would be no certainty that the insurance would ever be completed. As an insurance it would be foolish to postpone it, and ridiculous to do it piecemeal.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said, the question of Dover Harbour was much too large a one to enter upon at that hour. The subject would form a serious portion of the statement he had to make as soon as they got into Committee. The answer to the hon. Member's question was that Dover was not to be mentioned in the projected annual loan Bill; and the reason would be given in the exposition of the policy of the Government with regard to Dover Harbour. The same observation applied to other points raised in the course of the evening—that was to say, he must necessarily deal with them in the statement he hoped to make to the Committee to-morrow. His hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead raised a very specific question upon which he, no doubt, expected a reply. His hon. Friend was an engineer, and the question he raised was an engineering question, but the House did not consist of engineers, nor did the Government, nor even the Board of Admiralty. His hon. Friend had spoken somewhat contemptuously of the advisers of the Admiralty. The Admiralty were not quite so independent of technical advice as his hon. Friend necessarily was. They must be guided by their engineers. This case of water-tube boilers was an example of the extent with which the Board of Admiralty, whether the Naval or Civil element was concerned, must be guided by the best professional advice it could obtain. There were hundreds of questions in the administration of the Admiralty with which his hon. Friend was not familiar, on each of which they must be guided by professional opinion; but referring to the engineering advisers of the Admiralty, his hon. Friend spoke of them as belated something or another.

Mr. W. ALLAN: No; I never used such a phrase as that. I merely wanted to know who was responsible for the adoption of the Belleville boilers to such an extent.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Certainly, I am going to answer that question. His hon. Friend was himself a little belated in bringing this question before the House, because the adoption of the Belleville boiler was no new thing. It was mentioned a year ago to the House of Commons, and was a matter of notoriety in all sorts of ways. Not long ago the Engineer in-chief of the Navy read a Paper before the Society of Civil Engineers, in which this matter was expounded before experts and people of skill, and the thing passed apparently without discussion, certainly without disapproval, among men who were entitled to speak with as much authority as his hon. Friend. The history of the subject, as far as the Admiralty were concerned, was this. In 1885 a torpedo-boat was first of all fitted with these water-tube boilers. In 1888 three torpedoboats, meant for Indian service, were similarly dealt with. In 1892 another torpedo-boat was fitted in like manner. In 1891, the *Speedy* was fitted with water-tube boilers with satisfactory results, and in 1892, the Boiler Committee, which gave special advice to the Admiralty, recommended the adoption of these boilers for the new cruisers, and the *Sharpshooter* was fitted with Belleville boilers and another vessel with water-tube boilers of another type. Then the Admiralty sent out that despised Frenchman—who, by the way, was no more a Frenchman than the hon. Member for Gateshead was—they sent an engineer officer to examine the working of these boilers on board the large ships belonging to the Messageries Maritimes, and that officer no doubt spoke French; but as he was to be on board French ships, and to talk to French engineers, they considered that was rather a qualification for his mission. This officer went to Australia and back, and his report on the working of these boilers was entirely satisfactory. The next step was that the Committee on Machinery Designs expressed satisfaction at the proposal to use Belleville boilers for the *Powerful* and the *Terrible*. In the circumstances he could not see how the Admiralty could have acted otherwise than they did. Sir William White's opinion was in favour of these boilers, and the House, he was sure, would receive with respect his testimony, even on a point of technical engineering. But there was a more important authority still—namely, the Engineer-in-Chief of the Navy, Mr. Durston, who was really responsible for the adoption of these boilers. The Admiralty, he affirmed, had dealt with this matter as they were bound to deal with all technical matters. Other points raised by the hon. Member for Gateshead he need not refer to, as they had been disposed of already by several speakers, including the right hon. Member for Ormskirk, who could not subscribe to a denunciation of the policy of the Admiralty in general, because that would be to condemn himself. He would say, generally, however, that the hon. Member for Gateshead was wrong in what he had said respecting the *Blenheim*, the *Viking*, the *Blake*, and the *Hornet*. He trusted that the House would be of opinion that he had vindicated the action of the Admiralty, inasmuch as he had shown that the Board had sought the best advice obtainable, and had acted consistently upon it. The Admiralty were told that the advantages of these boilers were, higher steam power, less weight for a given steam power, and greater command of steam.

Those were specific advantages as to which they had had strong and professional assurance, and in that assurance they had taken the step of introducing them into these large ships. He hoped that hon. Members would now allow the Speaker to leave the Chair.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON pointed out that the allegation was that the boilers of the *Hornet* had been taken out. He would like to know whether that statement was true, because the *Hornet* was one of a large number of vessels so fitted, and if it was shown that the boilers had failed, it would be rather a serious thing.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON said, the tubes of the boilers of the *Hornet* were being changed from copper to steel, and that was going on while the vessel was under repair. He would give full particulars in Committee.

Mr. W. ALLAN said that it was impossible to change the tubes without taking out the boilers, and he would ask the hon. Gentleman whether these boilers were not now lying in a corner of the dockyard, and the ship open and practically gutted.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked why the Admiralty did not send some useful torpedo catchers to prevent the illegal trawling that was going on in the North. The Scotch Office, finding it impossible to get any decent vessels from the Admiralty, had prepared estimates for buying vessels. He thought it was time for an understanding as to whether they were to be fleeced by the Admiralty or not. There were nothing but old ships of something like eight knots employed in this work, and they had to control trawlers steaming 15 knots. It would be admirable work for torpedo catchers. If there were 20-knot steamers to look after the trawlers, an end would very soon be put to what was going on. He warned the Admiralty that unless something was done they would hear a great deal more of this matter when the Speaker left the Chair.

Mr. Edmund Robertson.

The House then went into Committee of Supply,

Sir J. Goldsmid in the Chair.

(In the Committee.)

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1895-6.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That 85,850 men and boys be employed for the Sea and Coastguard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1896, including 15,505 Royal Marines;"

Whereupon Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—*(Mr. Edmund Robertson.)*

Motion agreed to.

Committee Report Progress: to sit again to-morrow.

REPORT OF SUPPLY.

Report of Supply (Civil Service Supplementary Estimates)—8th March—was brought up and agreed to.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said, that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Bristol had asked him to give a short explanation of the Bill. It only placed the Australian Colonies in the same position for making fiscal arrangements, as the Cape and Canada were in at present. Special instructions would be issued that all proposals under the Bill should be by way of reserved bills, subject to the veto of the Crown, and that the Australian Colonies should not make any fiscal arrangements under the Bill practically without the consent of Her Majesty's

Government. He understood that the right hon. Gentleman was willing that the Bill should be passed.

*SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) observed that he had looked through the Bill very carefully, and, in his opinion, the wording would have to be amended in some respects, which he should be glad to point out privately to the Under Secretary for the Colonies.

Clauses 1 and 2, together with the Schedule, were agreed to, and the Bill was reported, without amendment, to the House.

FATAL ACCIDENTS INQUIRY SCOTLAND BILL.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan and Kinross) moved the Second Reading of the Bill, which, he explained, provided that there should be a public investigation in cases of fatal accident in industrial pursuits. The Bill was brought before Parliament last year, and hon. Members would be very familiar with it. There was a great desire amongst the industrial classes in Scotland to have it passed into law, and he now asked that it should be read a second time. If there was any difference of opinion with regard to the provisions of the measure, the matter could be quite well discussed in the Grand Committee to which he should ask that the Bill should be referred.

MR. W. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield) asked for an explanation of what the Bill did.

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR replied that it provided for a public inquiry with the sheriff and a jury in regard to fatal accidents occurring in industrial employments, the result of which, it was thought, would be to lead to the remedy of defects of mechanism and method in such employments, and thus prevent similar accidents in future. This particular form of inquiry had been much sought for by the working classes in Scotland for several years past.

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY (Buteshire) pointed out that it was then only five minutes to Twelve o'clock, and he objected to a measure of this character being read a second time without discussion. It was absurd to talk of this Bill as being familiar to Members of the House. It was, on the contrary, one which, by the action of the right hon. Gentleman, had been turned from a Bill which might have passed without opposition into a highly controversial Bill. He (Mr. Graham Murray) and those who thought with him were entirely opposed to the Bill in its present shape, containing, as it did, the objectionable provision for setting up a jury and making it imperative that that jury should pronounce an actual finding as to what was the cause of death. His right hon. Friend had said the result of this would be to mend the defects of mechanism and method. He himself believed that the result of the Bill would be to establish in Scotland a sort of bastard system—not exactly a coroner's inquest or not exactly the private inquiry to which they had hitherto been accustomed. He must beg entirely to differ from his right hon. Friend when he said that there was any real call or great anxiety for this Bill at all. He did not imagine any measure in regard to which there had been less expression of public opinion. He could imagine two objects alone for which the Bill was promoted, one of which was legitimate and the other entirely illegitimate. The legitimate object was, that when accidents occurred in industrial employments there should be such an inquiry as to make it possible in future to prevent those accidents happening. When the Bill was originally introduced, it was not provided that the public inquiry should be by a jury, and those who had experience of juries would agree that, while they were admirably suited for criminal work, they could not have a worse tribunal for getting at the real facts in cases such as would arise under this Bill. The first object of the Bill and the legitimate object would be best served by an inquiry where necessary by an expert. There was less necessity than ever for this Bill, because in the Factory Bill introduced by the Home Secretary the other day there was a provision for a public inquiry in the case of fatal accidents occurring in any trade. Were they to have public inquiries under the Fatal Accidents Inquiry Bill, and also under the Bill of the Home Secretary? It seemed to him if they were to have public inquiries under the Bill promoted by the Home Secretary, they should have them conducted in a proper way by an expert, who would be more likely to get to the bottom of these matters than the unsatisfactory tribunal of a jury.

It being midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND) (No. 2) BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to.

On Clause 3.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.) moved to omit in line 1 the words "by a Grand Juror," and to insert instead, "under the Grand Jury Acts."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. HAYDEN moved to omit, in line 7 of the same clause, the word "expressed," and to insert instead the words "expressly declared."

Amendment agreed to, and the clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

BURIALS BILL.

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield), asked leave to withdraw the Motion to send this Bill to the Standing Committee on Law, in order that it might be referred to a Committee of the whole House.

Leave given and Motion withdrawn.

On the Motion for the committal of the Bill to a Committee of the whole House being put, objection being taken, the Debate was adjourned.

MARKET GARDENERS' COMPENSATION BILL.

Colonel LONG (Worcestershire, Evesham), rose to move that this Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade, when objection was taken.

Mr. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) appealed to hon. Members to withdraw their objection to the Motion.

Mr. D. CRILLY (Mayo, N.) said he felt bound to object, because he recollected that the other evening Tory Members stopped the progress of an Irish Measure, after the Second Reading of the Bill now before the House had been allowed.

Mr. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT (Macclesfield) desired to point out that the Irish Bill to which the hon. Member referred had just passed through Committee.

Objection being still taken, the Motion was deferred.

THE COMMITTEE ON THE UNEMPLOYED.

The VICE-PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. Acland, York, W. R., Rotherham) brought up a Report from the Select Committee on Distress from Want of Employment.

Report ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 12th March 1895.

CONVENTION OF ROYAL BURGHS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1879) AMENDMENT BILL.

*LORD BALFOUR, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said, he believed there would be no opposition to it. The Bill passed in another place without objection. Anyone who knew the municipal life of Scotland would be aware that, as at present constituted, the Convention of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs, including, as it did, only Royal and Parliamentary Burghs, was not fully representative of the municipal life of Scotland. The object of the Bill, to which he asked their Lordships to give a Second Reading, was to make it possible for the police burghs to join the Convention if they desired to do so. There was nothing compulsory in the measure. It was permissive, and therefore only affected the police burghs which desired to join. Those that did not desire to join could remain outside as at present.

Bill read 2^a.

LAND TRANSFER BILL.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, explained that it had been more than once before the House. It was referred to a Standing Committee, but further proceedings were postponed at the suggestion of the noble Marquess, the Leader of the Opposition, that it might be considered whether the Finance Act of 1894, rendered any changes necessary. The Bill would probably be referred to a Standing Committee.

Bill read 2^a.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.

LORD PLAYFAIR, in the absence of Lord RIBBLESDALE, moved the Third Reading of this Bill, which was agreed to, and the Bill was passed.

LARCENY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the Motion of the LORD CHANCELLOR, the House went into Committee on this Bill, the Earl of MORLEY presiding.

Bill reported, without amendment, to the House.

PERJURY BILL.

This Bill passed through Committee, and was reported, without amendment, to the House.

THE IRISH TITHE RENT-CHARGE FUND.

*THE EARL OF BELMORE rose—

> "to ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Treasury have looked into the matter of the Irish Tithe Rent-charge Fund, as promised by the First Lord of the Treasury last Session; and, if so, whether and when a memorandum on the subject will be presented to the House."

The noble Earl said the question was one which he brought before their Lordships' House on two occasions last year. Therefore, although it was a subject of considerable importance, he need not say much by way of preface to his question. He would just remind their Lordships that last year he pointed out that the Irish Tithe-rent Charge, paid by the landowners of Ireland and commuted under the Irish Church Act of 1869 was based on a wrong calculation. When he said that he did not mean that the calculation was not made on the basis of the Irish Church Act, but he contended that the clause in that Act which ruled the calculation did not carry out the intention of Parliament and the promises of Mr. Gladstone in all his speeches in dealing with that Bill. On a subsequent occasion he moved for a return of a complicated nature, and the Prime Minister (whose absence they regretted) was good enough to say that a return could not be given in the form he desired, but that the Government would look into the matter and give a memorandum in some other form that would convey the information desired. He now wished to ask whether the Treasury had looked into the matter: whether they were prepared to lay that information before the House, and when they would supply it? The matter was important for this reason. As their lordships were aware, the price of trust securities at the present time

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

was very high; a considerable amount of land had been sold through the Land Purchase Court in Ireland—at any rate there had been as many sales as the Court could keep abreast of—and he was advised that it would be a good thing on receiving land stock to sell it at the present price and pay off the tithe rent-charge. Therefore, it was desirable that persons should know whether the Treasury were willing to look into this matter with a view to do justice, and that anyone who wished to pay off the tithe rent-charge would know he did it without prejudice to any future rights he might have. He saw the other day that Mr. Commissioner O'Brien, among others, gave evidence before the Committee on the Financial Relations between England and Ireland; and he stated, as an expert, in the strongest possible terms, that the tithe rent-charge had been enormously overcharged—he believed Mr. O'Brien put the figures at two millions; and he expressed the opinion—a strong one for an official—that those who had been paying the money ought to have it refunded to them. This was, shortly, the case he wished to lay before the Government, and he begged to ask the question which stood in his name?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of KIMBERLEY): I am sorry to say this matter was overlooked last year, owing to the fact that the Treasury were under the impression that the noble Earl would move for a Memorandum. However, such information as the Treasury can give shall be prepared, and laid as soon as possible on the Table of the House.

LORD ASHBOURNE said this was a grave matter for the landlords of Ireland, and pressed injuriously and harshly upon them as a question not only of positive law, but of administration. As pointed out by his noble Friend, if these rent-charges were sold, the price, according to Mr. Commissioner O'Brien, who must be regarded as an expert, would not realise more than 17 years' purchase. Yet the landlords were compelled, if they sought to redeem, to pay 22½ years' purchase. It was quite obvious that this was an urgent and pressing question, and if there was a serious mistake in fixing the 22½ years' purchase, it was plain that the matter should be set right. When the noble Earl who represented the Government said the matter was overlooked last year, everyone would accept his statement. But that it should have been overlooked was unfortunate. The matter was discussed on two occasions last year, and it was pointed out that it pressed grievously and harshly upon many owners of land in Ireland. There was another point in connection with this subject. It was distinctly a question of administration, and could be remedied without waiting for any report or change in the law. He referred to the way in which Tithe Rent-charge was collected by the Land Commission in their character as the representatives of the Irish Church Commission. They all knew the pressure that was sought to be put on the Irish landlords to give abundant and generous time to their tenants to pay their rents. When their cases came into the County Courts, under the Statute passed a few years ago, the County Court Judge had the power not only of suggesting that time should be given, but compelling time to be given by directing payment, spread over a considerable time, by instalments; and in every form in which public opinion could be applied, officially and otherwise, to the landlords, the duty was inculcated upon them not to be urgent in pressing for the speedy payment of rents. The landlords of Ireland had shown over and over again the most earnest desire to be considerate and reasonable to their tenants in seeking for payment of their rents. But there should be some reciprocity, and from a document which he held in his hand he was in a position to say that the solicitor to the Land Commission, acting, no doubt, under positive instructions, applied to the landowners to pay the Tithe Rent-charge almost to the day; and bearing in mind that the only means the landlords had to pay were the rents they received from the tenants, it was very hard with one voice to request them to give time to their tenants, and with another to say—

> "You must pay us to the day, even although you may have no funds, through the generosity and consideration you have shown to your tenants."

Here was a typical case of what went on. Tithe Rent-charge, amounting to £230, and only due last November, had been applied for within the last two or three weeks, in a letter from the solicitor to the Land Commission, saying it must be paid within six days. This was a harsh and unreasonable proceeding, and merited some expression of opinion from those responsible for the general conduct of the business that reasonable consideration should be shown to those who had to make these large payments at a time when the funds that might enable them to do so were often in arrear.

SEA FISHERIES REGULATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

LORD KENSINGTON (in the absence of Lord TWEEDMOUTH) moved that the following Lords be named the Select Committee to consider these Bills:—The Lord Privy Seal (Lord Tweedmouth), the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, the Marquess of Breadalbane, the Earl of Camperdown, Lord Saltoun, Lord Balfour, the Earl of Galloway, the Marquess of Huntly, the Marquess of Lothian, the Earl of Kintore, Lord Brassey, Lord Playfair, and Lord Welby.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at Fifteen Minutes before Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 12th March, 1895.

The House met at Three of the Clock.

MOTIONS.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (GENERAL POWERS) BILL.

*DR. FARQUHARSON, in moving the Second Reading of the London County Council (General Powers) Bill, said that, in pursuance of an arrangement which had been come to between the hon. Member for Shoreditch and the right hon. and Learned Member for Bury, part four in the Bill would be withdrawn in Committee.

Bill read 2°.

POLICE AND SANITARY REGULATIONS COMMITTEE.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, Bedfordshire, N.) moved—

> "That the Committee of Selection do appoint a Committee, not exceeding nine Members, to whom shall be committted all Private Bills promoted by Municipal and other Local Authorities by which it is proposed to create powers relating to Police and Sanitary Regulations which deviate from, or are in extension of, or are repugnant to, the General Law. That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records, and that three be the quorum of the Committee."

*MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) said, their proposed Committee was an important one, and he thought it would be advisable that, before the Question was put, a few observations should be made. It was a good many years since the Committee was first appointed, and though it had to some extent been of an intermittent character, yet in its inception it had the important object of preventing from creeping into Private Bills any Clauses deviating from extensions of or re-payment to the public law. In 1893 the then President of the Local Government Board made a speech with respect to its procedure, and at the conclusion of his remarks went as far as to say that he should reserve his right in the Session of 1894 to oppose the appointment of the Committee. That was strong language for the President of the Local Government Board to use, but it was justified on the ground that the original idea of the appointment of the Committee had to a certain extent been departed from. The Committee was intended to act as a safeguard, but in some quarters its very existence had been regarded as an invitation to local bodies to secure in Private Bills powers which would not be granted by any Public Bill. The speech to which he had referred was made under very different circumstances from those in which we now found ourselves, because then there was a very strong instruction to the Committee which he did not notice on the paper to-day, which made certain standing orders applicable to all Bills that were referred to the Committee; which instructed the Committee not to sanction any clauses which should be the subject of five Acts of Parliament, and which required a certain interval between the Committee report of Bills and their consideration by the House. That instruction did not appear when the Committee was moved for last year, nor did it appear now. The Under Secretary for the Home Department said that the Standing Order 150 and 173A were applicable to the proceedings of the Committee, and that it was unnecessary, therefore, to move the instruction. Certainly, some objections had been taken to the instruction because of the limiting and hampering nature its effect would have, but on the other hand he considered that the Standing Orders which the Home Office deemed applicable were in themselves of a limiting character. It was clear from them that Parliament considered it necessary and obligatory on the Committee to see that cases were fully made out before they granted powers, that in fact presumption was against granting them unless there was ample and abundant proof that they were necessary. He did not speak as having been a member of that Committee, but as a Member of the House, and he thought that anyone cognisant with the proceedings in the Torquay and Eastbourne cases would acknowledge that this was a matter which required great care in treatment. All the difficulties in those cases had happened simply and solely because the Police and Sanitary Committee allowed in the Bill of these Corporations some words, the effect of which was not brought thoroughly home to the mind of the Committee. The consequences in the cases of Torquay and Eastbourne were most serious. Special Committees had to be appointed; the time of the House was wasted; and in the localities concerned the most lamentable proceedings took place. The Division this Session on the Glasgow Corporation Bill was an indication of the mind of Parliament. In that case a large minority supported a proposal to strike out without further proceedings two clauses of that Bill that in their opinion were objectionable. He did not wish to oppose the setting up of the Committee. It undertook very heavy work, and its indefatigable chairman had very arduous duties to perform. But he asked from the Under Secretary for the Home Office some assurance that the Department considered that what he had indicated as the mind of Parliament was amply safeguarded by these two Standing Orders governing the proceedings of the Committee. He also asked from the Chairman of that Committee some assurance that the Committee would be guided by the principle he had endeavoured to lay down—namely, that a case must be proved up to the hilt before exceptional powers were granted, and that Parliament should be fully and adequately informed of the reasons of the Committee as to why they had been granted.

*Sir C. W. DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said, he had no doubt the Chairman of the Committee would take as a testimony to his impartiality that the objections which he (Sir C. W. Dilke) would urge were exactly in an opposite direction to those urged by the hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division. The Association of Municipal Corporations, and those who represented their feelings in the House, were of opinion that the Committee, instead of interfering too little interfered too much with the Bills of the Municipal Corporations. Surely they ought to allow Municipal Corporations, who were responsible to their own electors, to have their own way upon matters of purely domestic and internal concern. The country talked about centralisation, but this Committee had been in conflict with local bodies upon matters which one would think entirely concerned themselves. The Instruction to which the hon. Member had referred was omitted last year after debate, on the suggestion of the Member for Islington, who was Chairman of the Association of Municipal Corporations, in consequence of very strong representations made by the whole of the Municipal Corporations of the country with regard to the proceedings of the Committee. He was bound to say that the Home Office view that it made no difference had proved to be correct, because the proceedings of the Committee since the Instruction was omitted had been precisely the same as the proceedings previously. [Mr. LONG dissented.] The reports in every case showed that the Committee had never allowed a Municipal Corporations to depart from the general law of the land unless there were exceptional and special circumstances shown as a reason for so doing, precisely the same as before the Instruction was omitted. The strong case put forward last year for allowing Municipal Corporations more freedom than the Committee was disposed to afford them was that of the Corporation of Leeds. The Bill of that Corporation had been completely cut to pieces in the preceding year, and the feeling of the House was, that the Committee should be more careful in dealing with the Bills of such Corporations. He admitted that this year the House seemed to have reverted to its former feeling; but he thought there was reason for asking it to pause, in the interests of those great responsible Municipal Corporations before going back again too strongly in the opposite direction. It had been suggested that the right way for these Corporations to obtain such special regulations as they wished was by Provisional Orders. They had a very interesting Debate two years ago on a Provisional Order Bill, relating, among other places, to Coventry; and because objection was raised, on behalf of a single landowner, to a particular scheme, the Government at once abandoned it. Since that time the Corporation of Coventry had been placed in this position—they had been unable to carry forward that scheme; no one had been able to suggest any other workable scheme, and they were being prosecuted now through no fault of their own. So long as Corporations were placed in this position they would have to come to the House by means of private Bills. The Provisional Order system could not meet the case unless the Government were prepared to support them to some extent to which they had not been prepared to go in the past. As an instance of the manner in which the Committee dealt with Corporations, he would give the case of the Gloucester Corporation Bill last Session. That Bill contained a clause dealing with a trifling matter—the scattering of handbills in the streets. That clause was actually struck out on the ground that there was no precedent for it. It seemed to him that a Corporation responsible to its own electorate ought to be allowed to have its own way in a trifling matter of that kind; and it was ridiculous that a Committee should strike a clause out of the Bill of a public body, not because it was objectionable in itself, but because there was no precedent.

Mr. **WALTER LONG** (Liverpool, West Derby) said, that speaking from recollection, he thought the Gloucester Corporation proposed to make the offence punishable in a rather severe manner.

*Sir **C. W. DILKE** said, it was impossible to tell what was in the mind of the Committee. The reason he had named was the only one that came before the House. But if it were only to the extent of the penalties that objection was taken, that was a matter in which the Corporation might have come to terms with the Committee. Then there was the case of the Cardiff Corporation Bill. The Corporation proposed certain regulations with regard to bakehouses, but the Committee refused to sanction them on the ground that they were too stringent. That was a matter he thought might very well have been left to the Corporation of a great city like Cardiff. In the same Bill they deleted a clause relating to flowers in cemeteries. The Committee objected to that on the ground that there was no precedent. If the work of the Committee was very heavy it was partly caused by the extent to which they went into such very small matters as those which he had mentioned, while larger matters, such as those suggested by the hon. Gentleman, were allowed to escape their attention. He had been led to make these remarks as a correction from the point of view of the Municipal Corporations to those made by the hon. Member for Rushcliffe, and he was sure the Chairman of the Committee would take them as a testimony to the general impartiality of the Committee.

*Sir **JULIAN GOLDSMID** (St. Pancras, E.) thought the speech of the right hon. Baronet strongly confirmed the contention of the hon. Member for Rushcliffe that there ought to be a special reason given when there was a departure from the general law. The Corporation of Gloucester proposed the creation of a new offence. That was a departure from the general law, which the Committee very properly refused to sanction. He agreed with the principle that the Committee should go into every proposed departure from the general law: should have the case proved up to the hilt, and should give the reasons on which they sanctioned the departure. He thought it was not usual, when a Committee of nine was appointed, that only three should be a quorum. He would like to know why there was this change from the usual practice. He believed that the usual number would be five for a quorum in a Committee of this kind, and he would like to know why three had been adopted as the quorum in this particular case.

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL desired to say briefly and generally that the speech of his hon. Friend, and the views he had expressed as to the functions of this Committee, entirely coincided with the views entertained by the Home Office. It was held last year that without the instruction the Committee would be able to conduct its business as effectively as before, and the presence of his hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Long) as Chairman of the Committee was as good as any number of instructions. He could not agree with the remarks of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean (Sir C. Dilke) as to procedure when he said that the drainage of Coventry was an interesting subject. That did not strike him as an interesting topic of debate. That was, in his view, the sort of business that was better dealt with by the procedure which this Committee afforded than by Provisional Orders. It was a satisfaction to know that the Member for Rushcliffe had the support of the hon. Baronet the Member for South St. Pancras in this matter.

MR. WALTER LONG did not know that he had any title to take part in this Debate, except that some reference had been made to his position as Chairman of the Committee. The thanks of that Committee were due to the Member for Rushcliffe for initiating this Debate, and for the support of the Member for St. Pancras (Sir J. Goldsmid); also, for the intimation that they had given as to the course of the procedure of the Committee in the future. The hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean (Sir C. Dilke had criticised the details of the work of the Committee. He was sorry that he had not the materials at hand at the moment to show why the Committee declined to sanction the particular clauses in the Bill to which the hon. Baronet had referred; but he could assure him that the Committee had not unduly developed upon *minutiæ.* The desire of the Committee had been to meet the requirements of the municipal corporations, but, at the same time, to bear in mind the explicit instruction of the House, that the Committee should not sanction a departure from the general law of the land, unless there were some very strong reasons advanced in the particular locality which made that locality different from the circumstances of any other locality affected by the same law. The right hon. Baronet had, moreover, told the House that no practical difference had been made by the omission of the instruction. The difference had been in the reports made to the House. Owing to the instruction, it had been held that the reports must be made under the individual authority of the Chairman of the Committee, and must go into detail showing why a departure had been allowed from the general law. Under the Standing Order, the reports had not been so explicit. He hoped that in future the reports would state distinctly what the alterations had been, and why the alterations had been made. If it were his privilege to be again appointed Chairman of the Committee, he would accept that as an instruction from the House. The right hon. Baronet had told the House that, in his opinion, the Municipal Corporations ought to be able to obtain the powers sought by them, but, if that were carried to its logical conclusion, why should the Municipal Corporations be called upon to come to the House at all to obtain those powers. It was generally extremely difficult to ascertain from those who represented the Corporations in these cases, whether or not the particular Legislation asked for in their Bills had been really approved by the ratepayers. Evidence was, indeed, given that the requisite statutory formalities had been complied with, but, on inquiry, it generally turned out that the meeting called to consider the proposed Bill had been attended by only some 40 or 50 persons out of a constituency of perhaps 100,000 or more. Was that to be taken as a fair indication of the views of the inhabitants? The right hon. Baronet spoke of a hard case. He would tell him of another hard case. In a certain Bill, it was proposed to make it a penal offence for excursionists to a particular seaside town to throw about the paper in which they carried their buns. It was most important that the House should realise the responsibility which these Committees had to perform, and that the House should say whether it was desirable that a Committee should absolve Parliament from the responsibility of altering the criminal law of the land, for that was what it came to. Standing Order 173A was sufficient for the Committee if they dealt with it in light of the expressed opinion of Parliament. The Local Government Board only criticised those parts of a Bill which they considered to be departures from such portions of the measures as they had control over. The reasons which led the Committee to come to their conclusions were to be found in the evidence given before them. As to the quorum, he agreed that the number now proposed was too small in a Committee of nine. It was, however, found that the Committee were often unable to begin the hearing of Bills, because a larger number of the Members of the Committee were not present. Although the Committee had proceeded with formal parts with a quorum of three, they had never proceeded to consider the important parts of a Bill until a larger number were present. It was solely with the object of enabling the Committee to deal with the formal parts of a Bill that the quorum of three was proposed. He hoped that the Committee would be appointed as proposed by the Under Secretary for the Home Department. If he were appointed to serve on the Committee, he would certainly carry with him the recollection of this Debate.

Motion agreed to.

OCCUPATIONS OF THE PEOPLE (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Return ordered showing the numbers of Males and Females (distinguishing those aged under and over 20 years) enumerated in England and Wales at each of the three Censuses in 1871, 1881, and 1891, under the various occupational headings in the Census Reports for those years, corrected as far as possible for changes in the system of classification adopted at these successive Censuses; the figures for 1881 and 1871 corrected and adjusted so as to make them as nearly as possible comparable with those of 1891. All ascertained changes adopted in the classification of Occupations in 1881 and 1891 to be fully noted in the Return, even if the change is of such a character as to render correction of the figures for such changes impossible:—

Occupational Headings.	Males.									Females.								
	Total.			Under 20.			Above 20.			Total.			Under 20.			Above 20.		
	1891	1881	1871	1891	1881	1871	1891	1881	1871	1891	1881	1871	1891	1881	1871	1891	1881	1871

QUESTIONS.

THE NAVAL RESERVE FUND AND THE POST OFFICE.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN: On behalf of the hon. Member for the St. Patrick's

Division of Dublin (Mr. W. Field), I beg to ask the Postmaster General will he explain on what grounds a Naval Reserve man has been appointed acting rural postman between Cork and Waterfall, while several duly-qualified telegraph messengers employed at the Cork Office were passed over in making such appointment; whether such appointments are expressly forbidden by Post Office regulations while such messengers are available; and whether men of this class have been found satisfactory servants hitherto?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): It is the case that a Naval Reserve man has been placed temporarily on the duty of rural postman between Cork and Waterfall. The question of a permanent appointment is now under my consideration, and in coming to a decision I will take care that the claims of qualified telegraph messengers employed at the Cork office are not overlooked. I have no reason to think that men of the Naval Reserve have been found to make unsatisfactory post office servants.

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS COMMISSION.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN: On behalf of Mr. Field, I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the total cost of the Bovine Tuberculosis Commission has yet been ascertained; whether the details of expenditure for experiments, for professional services, and for printing have been furnished, and what is the amount; and whether there is any time limit placed on the proceedings of this Committee?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The total cost of the Tuberculosis Commission may be put approximately at £7,500. This includes a sum of £4,672 for special scientific investigations (covering experiments and professional services) and an estimated expenditure of £660 on printing. I understand that the proceedings of the Commission will not extend beyond the present financial year.

SCIENCE AND ART SCHOOLS IN IRELAND.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN: On behalf of Mr. Field, I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is the intention of the Department to make building grants in aid of the erection of technical schools in Ireland; and if so, upon what conditions?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The Science and Art Department make building grants in Ireland for science schools and art schools on the same conditions as in England. The conditions under which these building grants are given will be found in the Science and Art Directory, page 6, paragraph XIII. It is not proposed to alter these conditions.

THE ARMY PAY CORPS.

MR. J. W. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to do anything to better the position of Staff Sergeants Major of the Army Pay Corps; and, whether any decision has been arrived at with regard to proposals submitted 12 months since?

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley): This subject can only be considered in connection with the status of Military Clerks throughout the Army. It presents many difficulties, and, having regard to the Warrant very recently issued, dealing with Military Clerks generally, the Secretary of State finds that he is unable to make the further concessions which have been submitted to him in regard to clerks of the Pay Department.

IRISH SEED POTATOES.

COLONEL SANDYS (Lancashire, S.W., Bootle): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at what price the seed potatoes are supplied to the peasantry on the north-west coast of Ireland; whether he is aware that poor people living between Belmullet and Portacloy, in county Mayo, whose wages are only 1s. 6d. a day when in work, have been, and are, charged 10s. a hundredweight, or £10 a ton for their seed potatoes; and whether he will in future allow them to enjoy the boon of seed potatoes at a price which they can afford to pay?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Seed Potatoes Supply Bill provides (as did also the similar Bill of 1890) that seed shall not be sold for less than the net price paid by the Guardians for it, inclusive of the expenses incurred for carriage, storage, and distribution. The price must, therefore, vary in different districts according to the contract price and to the expenses incurred in distribution. No seed has yet reached Belmullet Union for distribution, but the Guardians have entered into a contract for about 100 tons of Irish Champions at £5 12s. 6d. per ton, delivered in Belmullet, and for a small quantity of another kind of seed at £6 17s. 6d. per ton. To this will have to be added the cost of storage and distribution, and it is not possible, at present, to say what the price charged to the people will be, but the Local Government Board do not think it will amount to anything like so high a figure as that mentioned by the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Does the right hon. Gentleman state these are Irish Champions?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes; Irish Champions. They come from the North of Ireland, where a good many good things have come from.

THE TWEED ACTS.

Mr. MARK NAPIER (Roxburgh): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Commission about to be appointed will be empowered to inquire into and report upon the administration of the Tweed Acts, with special reference to the exceptional criminal procedure sanctioned by those Acts; and whether the range of the inquiry will extend to the whole area covered by the Tweed Acts?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. J. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): The reference will enable the Commissioners to inquire into the whole subject of the salmon and freshwater fisheries of the area to which the Tweed Acts relate, and into the exceptional criminal procedure under those Acts.

SALE OF DOMAINS IN EGYPT.

Mr. H. SETON-KARR (St. Helens): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will explain how it happened that the Bessendila estate in Egypt, part of the Daria Sanieh domains in the Gharbieh Province, was put up for sale by public auction in Cairo in 1894, and, after being knocked down to the highest bidder, a well-known native company of good standing, for £274,000, this sale was subsequently cancelled, and the estate privately sold to a Greek company for a less sum than that bid by the native company, although the latter company subsequently bid a further £20,000; whether he will explain generally the facts and circumstances of the sale of the said Bessendila estate; and whether, in view of the reports current in Cairo on this subject, the Government will institute an inquiry into the said facts and circumstances?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): The Egyptian Government has publicly reserved to itself the right of refusing or rejecting any offer for Daria land even after an auction, and this right it determined to exercise last spring in favour of the Behera Irrigation Pumping Company, which was anxious to acquire the estate in question. The reason for this decision on the part of the Egyptian Government was that it was thereby enabled to make arrangements for freeing itself from a contract entered into with the Company in 1880 for supplying the Government with pumps at a cost of £27,000 a year. The contract did not cease until 1900, and as the pumping system had long been superseded, the Company was receiving this payment for nothing. According to a report on the subject received from Lord Cromer in May last, the group of native capitalists who had outbid the Company at auction were to be offered by the Egyptian Government some other domain land which was shortly to be for sale. I shall be happy to show the Report in question to the hon. Member, but the subject seems not to be of sufficient general interest to publish a paper for Parliament.

Mr. SETON-KARR asked, with regard to the last paragraph of the question, was the hon. Gentleman aware that it was reported in Cairo that some thousands of pounds had been spent in bribing Egyptian officials.

Sir E. GREY: I have not heard that Report before, and I should say that the Report ought not to receive credence except on substantial evidence.

THE LOSS OF THE "PORT YARROCK."

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is his intention to direct the institution of criminal proceedings against the owners of the sailing ship *Port Yarrock*, which was wrecked in Brandon Bay, on the coast of Ireland, during the month of January, 1894, whereby the whole of her crew, numbering 21 hands, were drowned; and it was afterwards found by a court of inquiry that the managing owner, Robert John Rowat, was gravely to blame in respect of the undermanning of the vessel when she commenced her voyage, and neglecting to make clear to the master that his first duty was to take the ship from Brandon Bay to a place of safety.

Mr. BRYCE: The Court of Inquiry into the loss of the *Port Yarrock* found the managing owner, Mr. Robert John Rowat, to blame for allowing the vessel to go to sea short handed, and for not sending immediate instructions to the master to remove the vessel to a place of safety from Brandon Bay. Upon the receipt of the report of the Court, the Board of Trade at once submitted the case to Crown Counsel in Scotland with a view to prosecution. The matter was most carefully investigated and considered, but the Scottish Law Officers advised that the evidence was not such as to warrant the institution of criminal proceedings.

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON asked whether the right hon. gentleman was aware that letters had been submitted to the Board of Trade in connection with a previous ship where 21 lives were lost.

Mr. BRYCE said what had happened with regard to another ship could not influence the opinion of the law officers in this case.

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON asked whether the right hon. gentleman was aware that this owner had settled five claims already of relatives who sued for compensation.

This question was not answered.

Mr. Seaton-Karr.

THE AGED POOR COMMISSION.

Mr. C. ROUNDELL (York, W. R., Skipton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Report and Evidence taken before the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor is likely to be in the hands of hon. Members?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): The Report has not been received up to the present time, but I understand it is to reach the Home Office in the course of to-day, when it will be sent to Her Majesty without delay, and will be laid before Parliament immediately on its being received back from the Queen.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS IN IRELAND.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, (1) whether half the salaries of the executive officials in Ireland under the Public Health Acts are paid from Imperial funds; and (2), as the duties of inspector of cowsheds, dairies, and milkshops appointed under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts are in connection with the administration of the provisions of the Public Health Acts, and as the appointment of such inspectors, and the supervision of such officials, have been recently in the interests of public health transferred to the Local Government Board, who administer the Public Health Acts, why is it that half the salaries of these inspectors are not paid from Imperial funds?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The reply to the first paragraph is, yes—provided the salaries are within the scale provided by the Local Government Board. With regard to the second paragraph, the Irish Government are in communication with the Treasury on the subject, but at the present stage of the correspondence I am not in a position to make any statement in the matter.

DEATHS FROM STARVATION.

Mr. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Return of Deaths from Starvation, presented on the 14th August, 1894, and ordered to be printed on the following day, will be delivered; and, what has been the cause of the long delay?

MR. ASQUITH: The Return is at present in the hands of the printers, and will be issued as soon as possible. A considerable correspondence between the Local Government Board and Boards of Guardians, respecting certain cases in the Returns, was necessary before the matter could be got ready for the printers, which is the reason for what would appear to be a long delay.

ANGLO-PORTUGUESE GAS AND WATER COMPANY.

MR. J. AIRD (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that in June, 1887, the Anglo-Portuguese Gas and Water Company, Limited, was incorporated to construct gas and water works at Figueira da Foz in Portugal, with a distinct understanding from the town, confirmed by the Portuguese Minister at Lisbon, that the import duty on the material required for the construction of these works would afterwards be remitted, and that the Company then deposited the amount of the duty with the Customs authorities, and constructed the works, involving an outlay of £45,000, under the promise that a Bill would be introduced to return the duty; and whether, repeated applications having been made to the Portuguese Government, and also to the British Ambassador at Lisbon, as to the return of the deposit, and without result, Her Majesty's Government will bring the matter before the Portuguese Government?

SIR EDWARD GREY: The circumstances of this case are substantially as stated in the question. Instructions were sent last January to Her Majesty's Minister at Lisbon to press for the immediate satisfaction of the Company's claim, and he has addressed an urgent representation to the Portuguese Government on the subject.

CONLAN ESTATE, COUNTY WEXFORD.

MR. P. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the tenants on the Conlan estate, county Wexford, were in treaty, in Mr. Justice Monroe's Court, to purchase their holdings under the Land Purchase (Ireland) Act; that the Norwich Assurance Company has been permitted to step in and purchase the property at a less price than the tenants were willing to pay; and that this company has threatened to issue ejectments and writs against the tenants; whether he is aware that the tenants have offered the Company 17 years' purchase of the present rental; and, whether, in the interests of the peace of the locality, and to prevent charges on the ratepayers for extra police, he will be prepared to recommend that the tenants' offer be accepted?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed by the Registrar of the Land Judge's Court that negotiations had taken place with a view to the sale to the tenants of their holdings on the estate, but that in July, 1894, an offer of the Company referred to to purchase for £11,000 was accepted by the Land Judge. The Registrar states that no official record is kept of offers in such cases which have not been accepted, and that no information can, therefore, be given as to the price tendered by the tenants on the Conlan estate. He observes, however, as to the relative amount of the offers made by the tenants and the Norwich Union Company, that regard must be had to the fact that the offer of the tenants, if accepted at all, would only have been accepted subject to deduction of the sums necessary to redeem quit rent and tithe rent charge, and that the offer of the Norwich Company was made for the estate as it stood subject to these outgoings.

STEAM TRAWLING IN DONEGAL BAY.

MR. J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he is aware of the great loss and injury sustained by the fishermen on St. John's Point, Killybegs, by steam trawlers in Donegal Bay, which have, within the present year, three times cut and carried away their fishing gear; (2) whether he is aware that the fishing population on St. John's Point consists of 40 families, who have no land or any other means of subsistence save that derived from fishing, and that the destruction of their fishing gear by these steam trawlers literally reduces them to starvation; (3) whether he is aware that in

1893 a Court was held by the Inspector of Fisheries for the purpose of investigating into the advisability of passing a by-law, to be ratified by the Lord Lieutenant in Council, prohibiting these steam trawlers from coming into Donegal Bay within a well-defined boundary line, as is the universal practice elsewhere; and (4) whether, having regard to the great injury inflicted on these fishermen, and the danger that the irritation under which they suffer from the destruction of their property by the trawlers may lead to breaches of the peace, steps will be taken immediately for their protection, and for the security of their property, by cruisers or otherwise, from this molestation, for which there has hitherto been no redress?

*Mr. J. MORLEY: Representations have been made to Government to the effect stated in the first paragraph; and the statements in the second paragraph are also, I am informed, substantially correct. The inquiry referred to in the third paragraph was held, not in 1893, but in September of last year, and as a result of the investigation the Inspectors of Fisheries made a by-law proposing to prohibit steam trawling at all times within a line drawn from St. John's Point to Mullaghmore on the coast of Sligo, and also during certain months of each year within a line from Teelin to Inishmurray Island, and thence to Streeda Point, County Sligo. Owing to local representations recently made, a slight alteration seemed advisable in one of those defined lines, and a new by-law is in course of preparation, which will be submitted without unnecessary delay to the Privy Council for approval. Until the by-law shall have been passed there is no legal means of prohibiting steam trawling in these waters; but, of course, if a trawler knowingly destroys the gear of the line fishermen the latter have a legal remedy. The Inspectors of Fisheries, at the request of the owner of the trawler, have put him in communication with the fishermen, who have forwarded to him a list of their claims, and it is to be hoped a friendly arrangement will be arrived at between the parties.

SWINE FEVER, WEXFORD UNION.

Mr. FFRENCH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether his attention has been called to a resolution passed by the Wexford Board of Guardians, requesting the Privy Council to relieve the Wexford union of the Swine Fever Order, 1895; (2) whether he is aware that swine fever has been on the decline in this union under the system existing previous to the recent Order, and that it is quite possible to take sick pigs to a fair without in any way violating the Order of 1895; and (3) whether he would inquire if the restrictions have proved useless to cope with the disease, expensive to the ratepayers, and tended to diminish prices; if so, would he recommend the Privy Council to cancel the order in the Wexford union?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Attention has been drawn to the resolution of the Wexford Guardians, to which reference is made in the first paragraph. During the last quarter of 1894 there was a decrease in the number of outbreaks of disease reported in the union as compared with the preceding quarter. In the present year four outbreaks occurred in January and eight in February. The movement of diseased or suspected swine to a market or fair is prohibited by the General Order of 1893, and it was unnecessary, therefore, to make further provision on this subject in the Order of 1895. The local authority is also empowered with a view to preventing the spread of swine fever, to make regulations prohibiting or regulating the movement of swine within their district, or into their district. The working of the Order of 1895 is being carefully watched by the Veterinary Department, and if it be found that unnecessary restrictions are imposed in any district the question of their modification will be considered.

“BOND” TEA.

Mr. F. C. FRYE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the convictions of one Rasumess Jeirsen, at Nottingham and Birmingham, on Wednesday 27th February, carrying on trade in bond tea as Nelson and Co.; whether he is aware that the same person was convicted in London on 17th December, 1894, and in Manchester 7th January, 1895, but in spite of these convictions is continuing the business in London and Manchester without interference by the police; that in Hull and Portsmouth the police have declined to take proceedings against the same person although repeatedly appealed to; and that in Birmingham the police have withdrawn summonses against certain bond tea traders, who have been carrying on the trade for twelve months on the latter giving an undertaking to discontinue it, although they are still continuing the trade in London and district without interference; and, whether he proposes to take any action in the matter?

MR. ASQUITH: The matter is at present engaging the attention of the Public Prosecutor and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

AFFORESTATION IN THE HIGHLANDS.

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in the new Bill for the Amendment of County Government in Scotland, he will consider the question of afforestation in the Highlands and empower County and Parish Councils to levy rates in their respective districts, or borrow money on the security of those rates, in order to plant tracts of land now of little or no value locally or nationally?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): Such a proposal as the hon. Member refers to would come within the scope of the Bill, and it will be in his power to raise the question in Committee.

SCOTCH SALMON FISHERIES.

DR. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Government intend to implement their promise, made last Session, to introduce a Bill dealing with the question of salmon fisheries in Scotch waters?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: The Government are of opinion that the Crofter's Bill is entitled to precedence among Scotch measures which might raise serious points of controversy, and are unwilling to make a promise relating to the Business of the Session which might impair their precedence.

SCHOOL DOORS.

*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been directed to the great risk which arises, especially in the case of young children, from the use of doors which open outwards as well as inwards, as provided in Schedule 7 of the new Code, Articles (5) and (7) (b); and whether he is prepared to amend those provisions with a view to prevent such risk?

MR. A. H. D. ACLAND: If risk arises in any case from this provision as to new buildings, which is already in existence in many schools, the Department will be satisfied with doors opening outwards.

THE NEW CODE AND TRAINING COLLEGES.

*SIR F. S. POWELL: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education what will be the reasons for granting or refusing the permission from the Department, under Article 48 of the new Code, to attend the examination for admission to training colleges; and whether he is prepared to describe those reasons in the Code for the information and guidance of those who prepare the pupil teachers of the colleges, and of the candidates themselves?

MR. ACLAND: All candidates who have hitherto been permitted to attend will be permitted to attend in future. The words were inserted as a matter of convenience for the Department, in order that they might know in good time how many candidates there were likely to be.

SUPERINTENDENCE OF PUPIL TEACHERS.

*SIR F. S. POWELL: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education for what reasons successful candidates for certificates are or are not to be indicated in the list as entitled to superintend pupil teachers, under Article 61 of the new Code; and whether he is prepared to set forth more reasons in the Code, by regulations or otherwise?

MR. ACLAND: The new provision alluded to in no way affects the right of candidates who pass in the first or second division to superintend pupil teachers as heretofore. The words are merely to meet the cases of certain candidates who may not be placed in classes.

It refers to certain students in day training colleges whose classification is a matter of difficulty, but it gives them no special advantage.

DISTRESS IN LOUGHREA UNION.

MR. D. SHEEHY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many divisions, or parts of divisions, of Loughrea Union are scheduled as within the congested area; what applications have been made for help for these districts, and what grants were made or works assisted there; and what works, if any, are being helped, or to be started in this year of extreme want, in those congested districts?

*MR. J. MORLEY: Three of the divisions of this union are scheduled as within the jurisdiction of the Congested Districts Board, and three applications for the making and repairing of roads in these divisions have been made to the Board. The Board has signified its willingness to contribute £500 on certain condidions towards the cost of constructing a road in the Woodford division. In the other cases the Board decided that, having regard to the funds at its disposal, it could not take the projects into consideration unless the county is willing to contribute a substantial portion of the necessary outlay.

BARRACK INSPECTION.

LORD STANLEY (Lancashire, S.E., Westhoughton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when the drains of Chelsea Barracks, Wellington Barracks, St. George's Barracks, and Kensington Palace Barracks were last inspected, by whom, and what was the inspector's report in each case?

*MR. WOODALL: Apart from the ordinary quarterly barrack inspections, when defects are reported and remedied, no special report on the drains of the barracks referred to has been necessary, as nothing has occurred to arouse suspicion as to their sanitary condition.

MR. J. H. C. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): Has the smoke test been applied?

MR. WOODALL: I cannot say.

TELEGRAPHIC MONEY ORDERS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that telegraphic money orders can be exchanged between Egypt and France; and whether a similar arrangement can be made between Egypt and the United Kingdom; and whether he will institute negotiations for an exchange of money orders by telegraph between the United Kingdom and France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, and the Continent generally?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: I have to inform the hon. Member that the question to which he alludes was considered by the Treasury on representations made by my predecessor in 1892; but that the Treasury was not then prepared to authorise the Department to proceed in the matter. The subject is, in my opinion, well deserving of attention, and I propose to communicate again with the Treasury.

POSTAL ORDERS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that much dissatisfaction exists with the rules in respect to the cost of postal orders, under which it costs more to transmit sums between 7s. 6d. and 10s. than to send 10s., and costs more to send sums between 15s. and 20s. than to send 20s.; whether he will introduce a revised list and a series of postal orders, based throughout on the amount to be transmitted, so that it shall no longer, for instance, cost 2d. to send 9s. 6d. and only 1d. to send 10s., or 2½d. to send 17s. 6d. and 1½d. to send 20s.; and whether he will introduce a guinea order, so as to avoid the necessity of purchasing two orders and paying double commission?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: Both the points raised by the hon. Member have been more than once the subject of questions in this House. As regards the issue of a guinea order, I find that the hon. Member himself was answered by the then Postmaster General, on 31st March, 1890. An increase in the number of denominations would increase the expense and involve higher rates of commission. Under the circumstances, I am not prepared to support the hon. Member's suggestions.

DALMENY AND SOUTH QUEENSFERRY.

CAPTAIN T. HOPE (Linlithgow): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Local Government Board for Scotland have withheld their sanction for the allocation of Parish Councillors in the combined parish of Dalmeny and South Queensferry on the ground that the larger proportion of Councillors is assigned to the landward part of the parish which has a smaller population than the burghal area; whether he is aware that the circumstances of the combined parish are as follows:—landward portion, population 1,328, valuation £44,308, area 5,890 acres; burghal portion, population 1,531, valuation £9,975, area 100 acres; and that of every £1 paid in rates in the new parish 16s. 3d. will be paid by the landward portion and 3s. 9d. by the burghal portion; and that, acting in accordance with the terms of Section 9, (1), (d) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894, the County and Town Councils agreed, on the suggestion of the Town Council of Queensferry, to allocate five Councillors to the landward and four to the burghal portion of the parish, and that the Sub-section referred to provides only for the intervention of the Board failing agreement; if he will explain the reasons for a decision which ignores the agreement between the two local authorities concerned; and whether, before arriving at this decision, the special wants and circumstances of the landward portion of the parish were fully considered?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: The figures given in the hon. Member's question are approximately right. The Local Government Act of 1894, in Section 9, requires the approval of the Board for the number and proportion of Parish Councillors, whether there is agreement or not between the landward and burghal authorities. In this case it was proposed to give five members to the minority and four members to the majority. I cannot think that it would be right to give a majority of Councillors to an actual minority of population.

PENALTIES UNDER THE MARGARINE ACT, 1887.

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the clerks of the Metropolitan Police Courts have been directed by the Home Office to pay penalties recovered under the Margarine Act, 1887, into the account of the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police?

MR. ASQUITH: The answer is in the affirmative. I am advised that the effect of the law is that such penalties should go to the Receiver except in so far as the convicting magistrate does not expressly order them to be paid towards the informers' expenses under Section 11 of the Act 50 & 51 Vic., c. 29 (the Margarine Act).

JUDICIAL STATISTICS.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the cause of the delay in the issue of the Judicial Statistics (Police, Criminal Proceedings, Prisons) for 1893; and when their publication may be expected?

MR. ASQUITH: These statistics have been revised, and to a great extent reconstructed in accordance with the recommendations of a Departmental Committee. One of the changes is that the Police Tables are now given for the year ending 31st December, instead of the year ending 29th September. This involves a delay of three months; and, in addition to this, there has been an enormous amount of additional labour in carrying out the revision. The Tables, however, are now in an advanced state of preparation, and will, I hope, be ready for publication along with the Committee's Report in about a month.

ILLEGAL MARKING OF GOODS.

SIR T. ROBINSON (Gloucester): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is in accordance with the rules of the Board of Customs, when illegally-marked goods are consigned by foreign houses to purchasers in this country, to refuse to treat with the foreign consignors for proper marking of or for the re-purchase of such goods, and to offer them at a price fixed by the Board of Customs to the English consignees after proper marking, thereby fining the foreign consignor the whole value of the goods, and making a profit to the Board of Customs on goods finally duly marked; and whether this practice has been sanctioned by the Treasury?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: In the case of the import of foreign-made goods bearing illegal marks, it is the practice of the Board, under the Merchandise Marks

Act, 1887, to treat each case on its merits, and to consider and give due weight to any explanation which may be received on the subject either from the consignees or the foreign consigners before deciding whether the goods shall be released on payment of a fine, and the removal of all illegal marks, or be ultimately retained as a seizure. As regards the disposal of goods which have been seized under the Act it is the practice, after six months from the date of the order directing the confiscation, to issue the order as to their disposal. Those goods which are neither patent nor copyright, and from which the illegal marks can be removed, are offered for sale by auction without reserve at the usual Customs sales, and the amount realised by such sale is carried to the Crown's account, no portion thereof being handed over either to consigner or consignee. It is not the usual practice to treat privately either with the consigner or the consignee for the sale of goods so seized, but in rare cases the Board have entertained an offer from the persons interested in the importation of such goods, and have sanctioned their release on payment of such a sum as, in their opinion, represented the value of the goods, subject, of course, to the removal of all illegal marks therefrom prior to delivery. In such cases the amount so paid is carried to the Crown's account, and no portion handed either to consignee or foreign consignor. The question as to any resulting loss caused to the consigner by the importation and subsequent sale by the Board to the importer of goods so restored appears to be one for settlement between the importer and the consigner, but not one in which the Crown is concerned. The powers of the Board of Customs in respect to the restoration of seized goods on such terms as they may consider fit are based on Section 209 of the Customs Consolidation Act, 1876.

THE CROFTERS' COMMISSION.

*MR. JOHN M'LEOD (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that a division of the Crofters' Commission, presided over by Commissioner M'Intyre, recently held sittings in the parish of Clyne, Sutherlandshire, for the purpose of hearing applications to fix a fair rent; and that, although intimation was made to the Crofters' Commission many months before that the crofters had appointed an agent to represent them at the inquiry, no intimation was made to that agent of the fact of the sittings being held, and consequently the crofters were wholly unrepresented; and whether, in view of these circumstances, he will make an order that the Crofters' Commission shall immediately re-hear the applications so soon as appeals against the decisions complained of have been lodged?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: Commissioner M'Intyre, with two assessors, held a series of sittings in the parish of Clyne, Sutherlandshire, commencing on 29th November, and continuing the same during December. As to the matter of intimation, notices were sent on 14th November to the Rev. John Murray, Free Church Minister of Clyne, and Convener of the County Council; to Joseph Macleod, the County Councillor for the parish, and to Dr. Murray, Brora, who took an active interest in crofters' affairs, intimating that sittings would be held on the 22nd of that month. At the request of Dr. Murray, on the one hand, and of the factor for the Duke of Sutherland on the other, the sittings were postponed to a later date. On the 19th November (ten days before the first sitting, which was held on the 29th) an official notice was sent to each crofter individually, advising him of the date on which the application relative to his holding would be heard. It was the duty of the crofters interested to inform their agent of the sitting, if they had one. The crofters appeared at the hearings, and stated such facts as they desired to bring before the Commissioner, but in no case was any complaint preferred that their agent had not received notice, nor any Motion made for an adjournment to enable them to instruct or communicate with their agent. With reference to appeals, Commissioner M'Intyre, during his recent inquiries in Clyne, disposed of 196 applications, and against his decisions 7 appeals have been intimated, and, of these, 5 have since been withdrawn, leaving 2 appeals out of 196 decisions awaiting the consideration of the Commissioners as a Court of Appeal.

RETURN OF RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

Mr. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade when the Return of Railway Accidents to 31st December 1894 will be issued; and whether in that Return will be included reports by the sub-inspectors on accidents locally investigated by them?

Mr. BRYCE: The Return is in the hands of the printers. No reports by sub-inspectors are included in it.

ACCIDENTS TO RAILWAY SERVANTS.

Mr. F. A. CHANNING: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what has been the number of railway servants killed by accidents in which the movement of vehicles used exclusively on railways was concerned, from the date at which the sub-inspectors of railways fully entered on their duties; what number of such fatal accidents have been investigated by inspectors of the Board of Trade, and in how many such instances the local inquiry has been made by one of the sub-inspectors; and in what form the reports and recommendations of the sub-inspectors will be laid before Parliament?

Mr. BRYCE: Since sub-inspectors entered on their duties, 148 railway servants have been killed by accidents in which the movement of vehicles was concerned, exclusive of train accidents. Twelve fatal accidents have been locally investigated by sub-inspectors. My hon. Friend will, no doubt, recollect that in fatal cases the law provides for an inquiry by the Coroner, and it is only where the Coroner's Return discloses an exceptional state of circumstances—namely, circumstances which call for special investigation—that the Board of Trade think it right to hold a fresh inquiry. If a Coroner asks the Board for the assistance of an inspector or sub-inspector at an inquest, the Board are always prepared to favourably consider the application. A Report dealing with the work of the sub-inspectors shall be laid before Parliament, but the Board of Trade have not yet determined what form it shall take.

DUBLIN POST OFFICE CLERKS.

Mr. J. J. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) I beg to ask the Postmaster General, with reference to his statement on the 28th December 1893, and the 20th April 1894, as to the memorial of the Second Division Clerks, Secretary's Office, General Post Office, Dublin, on the subject of the application to them of the improved scale lately applied the Second Division Clerks, Secretary's Office, London, whether any answer has yet been given to that memorial; and, if not, what is the reason of the delay?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: The subject to which the hon. Member refers affects about five or six clerks, and has presented much difficulty in connection with the Orders in Council relating to Second Division Clerks. I much regret the delay which has taken place, but it is believed that a solution of the difficulty has been arrived at which may be accepted by the Treasury.

THE IRISH MAILS.

Captain DONELLAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether any arrangement has yet been arrived at with the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company; and, if so, when he expects to be in a position to state the terms of agreement?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: No arrangement has yet been arrived at, but I hope shortly to receive an answer from the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company to some suggestions which I have made to the Company.

Mr. G. W. WOLFF (Belfast): Has the Post Office received any tenders, besides one from the City of Dublin?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: No, sir; not since I last read a statement on the subject to the House. I then said that there had been a tender received from a Liverpool firm. I could not accept that Liverpool tender, because it contained conditions with regard to the vessels to be employed which were opposed to the interests of the public service.

SECOND DIVISION CLERKS IN DUBLIN.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, (1) whether he will either state or give a Return of the number of Second Division Clerks of the Civil Service in Dublin promoted to the First Division or to higher posts (including the higher grade of the Second Division) since September 1888, showing the promotions to each Dublin office respectively, the number of Second Division Clerks employed in each office, and the average service of the clerks promoted; and (2), whether he will give the number of recommendations for promotion during the same period which were not acted upon?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: If the hon. Member will kindly repeat the question in a week's time, I shall be prepared to make a statement of the numbers and service of the Clerks, as suggested in the first paragraph. The information asked for in the second paragraph is confidential, and cannot properly be published.

EVICTED TENANTS IN IRELAND.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, in order to give facilities for the working of the clause in the Land Bill relating to the reinstatement of evicted tenants, he will renew the proposal in last year's Bill for a financial grant.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not quite know what financial proposal the hon. Gentleman means. Last year's Bill involved a compulsory reinstatement of the tenant. The present proposal is not compulsory, but voluntary, and is by way of purchase and not by way of reinstatement of the tenant. Therefore the financial proposals appropriate and expedient in the one case are not easily or obviously capable of application in the other case. But undoubtedly, if any financial proposal should be made and shown to be necessary, it would be considered by the Government.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): The right hon. Gentleman seems to imply by his answer that money would not be required under the present proposals because they are for purchase and not for reinstatement. But whether the tenants go back as tenants or purchasers they will require houses; and was not a part of the money asked for last year for the purpose of providing houses? Does the right hon. Gentleman propose any such provision this year?

Mr. J. MORLEY: It is quite true that one part of the financial proposals of last year's Bill was for repairing the buildings on the holdings within a limit of £50. The other and more important part of the proposal was for the discharge of arrears. The first proposal may, no doubt, be applied to the present Bill; and, if it should seem desirable that the case should be dealt with under this modification of Section 13, we should be prepared to consider a clause with that object.

Mr. J. REDMOND: Do the Government intend to make such a proposal on their own responsibility?

Mr. J. MORLEY: No, Sir; not as at present advised.

SWAZILAND.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (1) whether he can give the House any authentic information regarding the threatened Boer invasion of Swaziland; and (2) whether Her Majesty's Government have appointed a Consul to protect the rights of the Swazis, and who that Consul is?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): As regards the first question, Sir H. Loch has not telegraphed during the last day or two; and we have perfect confidence he would have done so if the necessity had arisen. As regards the second question, Mr. Stuart has been appointed Acting Consul; the question of the person who shall be appointed permanent Consul is under consideration.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Is that the same Mr. Stuart who was in charge of the deputation over here?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Yes, Sir.

CREDIT DRAPERS AND EXCISE LICENCES.

Sir E. S. HILL (Bristol, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he now sees his way to affording the members of the credit draper trade any relief from the necessity of taking out Excise licences under the Hawkers Act, 1888, the hardships of which were set forth in a letter addressed to him by the Bristol Credit Drapers' Association on the 14th March 1894.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): I am afraid that there is no possibility of exempting this particular class. As

Chancellor of the Exchequer, I have no interest in the hawkers' licences, as the money goes entirely to the local authority; and I am afraid that if I yielded to this demand I should expose myself to the wrath of the champions of the ratepayers, to whom this money belongs.

CONCILIATION (TRADE DISPUTES) BILL.

Mr. F. A. **CHANNING**: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, having regard to the grave extension of pending industrial disputes, he will endeavour to arrange for the Second Reading of the Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill on the earliest possible day, with the view of sending the Bill promptly to a Standing or Select Committee, and of passing into law the best suggestions Parliament can devise for a settlement of such disputes?

*Sir C. W. **DILKE** (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question, may I ask whether he will take into consideration the prior claims of the Factory Bill and the Truck Bill as measures of greater interest?

Sir W. **HARCOURT**: Yes, Sir, it is my duty to consider all conflicting claims.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. **BALFOUR** (Manchester, E.) whose rising, on return after illness, was received with cheers: Can the right hon. Gentleman give some indication of the course of business during the week, and, if possible, during the next week?

Sir W. **HARCOURT**: We are going on with Supply as fast as we can. As the Estimates seem to be generally approved, we might get the first Vote of the Navy Estimates to-night. If so, the Army Estimates would be brought forward on Thursday, and probably it will be convenient to finish the Supplementary Estimates on Friday. That is as much as I can say at present. I am extremely anxious to get these Estimates—which are all that will be necessary for introducing the Consolidated Fund Bill—introduced at the earliest possible period. That is our scheme for the present week.

Mr. **BALFOUR**: And with regard to the Vote on Account?

Sir W. **HARCOURT**: That is not necessary for the Appropriation Bill, but it is necessary that it should be taken before March 31. If we get the Supplementary Estimates and the Preliminary Votes for the Army and Navy, that is sufficient to float the Consolidated Fund Bill.

MOTIONS.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Courtney, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, 25th March, and to be printed. [Bill 164.]

SMALL TENANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Capt. Sinclair, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Tenure of Land in Scotland by Small Tenants.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 165.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

THE NAVY ESTIMATES, 1895-6.

The House went into Committee of Supply on the Navy Estimates.

Mr. Mellor occupied the Chair.

(In the Committee.)

On Vote A, for 88,850 men and boys,

The **CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY** (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee) said: In rising to submit to the Committee the Naval Estimates for the year, I wish to express my deep regret for the continued absence of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of the Admiralty, which renders it impossible for him to fulfil this duty himself. I have a selfish reason for this regret, because it was only on Thursday night last that I knew for certain that I should have to take my right hon. Friend's place; and, as a large portion of the matter dealt with in these Estimates does not come within my own official cognisance, I have had plenty to do in the interval. I mention this because I know that the House will be indulgent, on that account, to the necessary imperfections of my performance of this duty. I propose to-night to deal both with the Supplementary Estimate of last year, and with the Naval Estimates as far as they can be alluded to under this Vote; and I shall ask the House to let us have to-night the first Vote for this year, and the Supplementary Vote for the past year. The first point to which I direct attention is the Naval Defence Act. This Act finally expires this year, and it will be my duty and pleasure to take a last good-night of that measure. I will not say a single word about it which can be construed as a hostile criticism. I wish to point out first how it stands. The original scheme was this. The ship-building to be provided by the Act was divided into two parts—a dockyard part and a contract part. For the former, a limit of £11,500,000 was provided by the original Statute, and for the latter a limit of £10,000,000 was provided, and the period fixed was five years. By an amending Statute, passed in 1893, the reasons for which are familiar to the House, the dockyard limit was extended to £12,850,000, while the contract limit remained the same, and the period of time was extended to six years. The net result of this great enterprise is this: In the dockyard portion of the work there has been an excess of £750,000 over the original limit, and a saving of £600,000 on the amended limit. In the contract section there is a further excess of £7,000, but that is not real excess. Certain things, such as gun-mounts, were charged to the contract part of the work, and, on re-adjustment, it will be found to be part of the dockyard expenditure, so that there will be no real excess. On the total the original Estimate has been exceeded by £750,000 and lessened by £600,000, and the actual expenditure has been £22,241,000. This excess, so far as it exists, is represented by increased size, by increased power, and improvements in other ways in the ships built under the Naval Defence Act. Finally, all the ships, all the 70 ships included in the programme, are either in the Service or ready for service—a result upon which all connected with the Act may fairly congratulate themselves. I hope it will not be thought amiss on my part if I say a word or two of criticism on the Act. I was never an embittered opponent of its policy, but I did recognise in the Act two defects, and the first of these was that its eyes were directed more exclusively to ships—and I mention this as leading up to what I may have to say afterwards. It had this defect also, that it was conceived in a spirit of distrust: distrust of the Treasury—at which, perhaps, I ought not to be surprised — distrust of the Admiralty as a corporation, and distrust of this House as an Institution—how little deserved, however, every subsequent year has shown. Finally, of its finance —and I may say this without reflection on anybody—the difficulties of its finance are indescribable, and it is matter for congratulation that these difficulties have no longer to be encountered. Notwithstanding all its great performance, those who were responsible for its inception, and those who carried it to its close, may be allowed to congratulate each other, and for my part—well, "I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him." I am going to follow in the main line adopted by the First Lord in his Memorandum submitted to Parliament, and I shall deal with only a few topics outside that Memorandum. I may venture to say that it is fortunate for myself, finding myself in this position, that the conspicuous feature of the Estimates which distinguishes them from previous years is the immense development of the works programme, for which I am more especially responsible. I come then to the points dealt with by Lord Spencer; and, first, as to the numbers. A few figures will show the extent of the increase. Two years ago the total called for was 76,700; in 1894–95 we asked for 83,400, an increase of 6,700 in that year; and, in the present year, we are asking for the enormous total of 88,850, a further increase of 5,450. The net increase in two years is 12,150 to the number of men in the Navy. Under this head there are one or two items I will deal with briefly. It will be noticed there is no increase in the number of marines this year, and it will be observed that the total increase in the number of marines in the two preceding years was 1,000. Then, in connection with this subject, it may be noticed that the First Lord mentions the failure of the attempt we made to recruit from the Mercantile Marine last year. We thought we should get some 800 men by direct invitation, but, as a matter of fact, only 50 responded to the invitation or complied with the conditions, and so we had to look elsewhere for recruits. I do not know what explanation can be given of the failure—possibly the qualifications were too high. At all events, adult seamen did not come forward, and so we were obliged to resort to the expedient of commissioning a special ship, a new kind of training ship, the *Northampton*, and we sent her round the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland for the purpose of recruiting boys a year older than the average age of boys in training ships. That experiment, I am glad to say, has been a success. I do not think that any proceeding of the Admiralty has excited more interest in the House, judging by the questions put to me on the subject, than the cruise of the *Northampton*. Among the ports there have been many competitors for a visit from the ship. I not know whether hon. Members who pressed me for the privilege of a visit from the ship to some port in which they were interested are here now, but in the competition I may here say that I think those ports which responded best in the last cruise ought to have some kind of preferential claim in the future. Among the numbers of recruits, I may mention that Portland supplied 13, Torbay 27, Queenstown 32, Dunmore 14, Campbeltown and Greenock only three and two. The success of the recruiting cruise of the *Northampton*, I may say, was greater in Ireland than elsewhere. The only other item in connection with the numbers I think I need refer to is the engine-room artificer. My colleagues and myself had the honour to receive a deputation from Members of the House interested in this question, and they adopted this way of making known to us instead of asking questions here on the Estimates. I can assure hon. Members that we have kept in mind their recommendations, and, though I cannot say all have been acceded to, I can at least say this—that my colleagues and myself will be delighted to see these gentlemen again and hear their further views. In the engine-room officers there is an increase from 785 to 828, and there is an increase in artificers of 174, making a total increase in two years of 524. The number of stokers will be increased by 1,750, and of this class I may remark that, while 10 years ago there were 5,000 stokers in the Service, there are now 15,000 required. I may just mention a small reform we have been able to make in the interest of engineer officers. We have been reminded of a social grievance which existed at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, where the engineer officers were relegated to a separate mess from other officers of the Royal Navy, and we have decided to abolish that distinction. In future both classes of officers of the Navy studying at Greenwich will mess together, as they ought to do. Then, in respect to engineer officers, we have in hand, though the matter is not complete enough to allow me to make a definite statement, a proposal for a large addition to the pay of these officers, and also large improvements in their retiring allowances. I forget at the moment what the amount is we take—something like £9,000—and this will relieve to some extent the grievances engineer officers conceive they suffer. As to engine-room artificers, we have made certain modifications so far as we can, for the better accommodation on board ship for this excellent class of men, and this I may be allowed to say, because it corrects a false impression—that engine-room artificers are eligible for admission to the rank of engineers for temporary service alluded to in the First Lord's statement.

Captain BETHELL: Is that new?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I cannot say if it is new. I know that the illusion existed, and to dispel it is new. Now I come to the shipbuiling, and the amount to be expended on new construction. First, let me call the attention of the Committee to the progress made in new construction during last year. In order to make this perfectly clear to the Committee I ask Members to make a distinction under three classes. In three divisions the ships in course of building last year fall—those under the Naval Defence Act now about to close, those which are called the further programme; and that further programme, again, is divided into two parts—those ships begun before last year's programme, and those begun under the programme. The first portion was authorised by our predecessors at the Admiralty. The *Magnificent*, *Majestic*, *Renown*, *Powerful*, and *Terrible* were ordered by the present Board. The second part may be called Lord Spencer's programme. It was a programme intended for five years' shipbuilding, and we laid before the House and the country only the first annual instalment of the programme, keeping the rest of the programme to ourselves. This was our procedure, and we were subjected to some criticism then, though not, I think, in the year since elapsed. The Committee would keep these facts in mind in relation to the new construction for the year. Under the Naval Defence Act there was for the year a total of new construction in dockyards and by contract of £337,588, and the further programme is intended to take an expenditure of £4,333,771. That makes a total expenditure of £4,671,000 upon construction. It is largely in excess of the Vote we took last year for new construction—namely, £4,500,000; but the amount by which that sum has been exceeded, about £150,000, has been devoted to new construction. That amount, of course, is met out of the Supplementary Estimate now before the Committee, which we propose to treat as part of the new Estimate. I consider, and I think the House will consider, that this statement shows a complete fulfilment, and more than a complete fulfilment, of the promises we made last year. But those promises have been fulfilled under circumstances of great difficulty. There was, for instance, the Scotch coal strike, which paralysed the industries on the Clyde; and although men were waiting for work, yet they could not get on with the building of one of our cruisers in consequence of it. Then, again, there was the comparatively smaller strike of the moulders and pattern-makers, which paralysed the north-east coast of England, while a further difficulty was the severe and long-continued winter we have experienced, but which, I hope, has now passed by. All these things interfere with a shipbuilding programme; but, in spite of them, we have done all that we said, and more than we said, we would do. Another part of the work which has been interfered with is that in connection with the torpedo-boat destroyers, but even in this case 78 per cent. of the expenditure provided for will actually have been earned by the end of the financial year. Since my noble Friend's statement was laid before the House, I have obtained some additional information which shows that at the present moment 10 of the 42 torpedo-boat destroyers have successfully passed their trials; two others are undergoing their trials, and the rest will be pushed forward to completion as early as possible. I should like the Committee to go through what I may call the financial history of the building of a great battleship, and I will take the *Magnificent*, because a good deal of criticisms and allegations have been made as to our slow progress when she was begun. That vessel was laid down on the 18th of December 1893, and she was floated out on the 19th of December 1894, and here is the way in which a ship built under these conditions comes into actual existence. The expenditure for the first year, that is 1893 94, was £60,000; and for 1894–95 I may take it to be £485,000, which is the probable expenditure down to the 31st of March. The expenditure of the coming year, 1895–96, will be £321,000, leaving only at the end of the next year £43,000 to be spent upon her. That vessel has been pushed forward with unexampled rapidity, and the years upon which the expenditure falls most heavily are the two middle years, the first and the last involving comparatively little outlay. I refer to that as an example of the rapidity of construction, which is most creditable to the dockyards concerned; and I may say that similar efforts, equally creditable, have been made by those private contractors by whom so large a portion of the work of the Admiralty is done. That is all I propose saying with regard to the progress made last year, and I now come to the forecast for 1895–96, which is to say, the second instalment of the new programme.

In Lord Spencer's statement it will be seen that there are to be several first-class cruisers; but, although I cannot give particulars about them now, yet I will undertake that full particulars and information respecting them shall be laid before the House before we reach Vote 8. With regard to the second-class cruisers which will be laid down, I have one observation to make. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Ormskirk yesterday called attention to the dimensions of these cruisers, but I must say that the vessels have been designed with a view to certain specific services in which great manœuvring power will be of great value, and in order to increase that power their length has been somewhat diminished and the beam increased. I may remind my right hon. Friend that belted cruisers of the *Orlando* type, which are giving much satisfaction in actual service both as steamers and sea boats, are approximately of the same displacement as the new vessels, and have a proportion of beam to length of about five in the old to five and a half in the new. The 20 torpedo-boat destroyers, which are to be ordered during the coming year, have not yet had their designs settled, but I want to say that we fully recognise the services of those firms which have hitherto executed our orders, and that we hope again to avail ourselves of the special enterprise, experience, and skill which they have shown. The total for new construction for 1895-96 is £5,393,642, as against £4,500,000 for 1894-95, but the increase for new construction for the coming year will be explained, as in the case of the *Magnificent*, to the advanced stage in which various battleships will be in that year. There have been some criticisms on the progress proposed to be made with battleships, and the right hon. Gentleman opposite has complained that that progress is not rapid enough. But I have taken out figures showing that of the total for construction—over five millions—one-half will be spent upon the ten battleships, and while enormous progress is made on the two ships which stand at the head of the list, I may say that the progress upon the slowest in construction will be at a higher rate than on any ship in any foreign yard. Now I come to the dockyard administration of the Admiralty. Lord Spencer's memorandum calls attention to two experiments which have been made. As to the introduction of the eight hours day, although I have not been able to satisfy the curiosity of hon. Members as to the general result of that system, yet I can only repeat what I have said before—that so far it is satisfactory. But there is another reform of almost greater social interest than that of the eight hours day—namely, the introduction of a new mode of paying the allotment of seamen's wages to their wives or other relatives, and I hope the dockyard Members are present to hear what I have to say about it. This is a dockyard question, because the wives of our sailors live in the dockyard towns, and under the old system they had on certain days to go to the yard gates to get their money. In Devonport perhaps will be found the largest number, and they would go in thousands, waiting to be paid, and not infrequently would have to go more than once at grave inconvenience. Hon. Members representing dockyard towns brought to the notice of the Admiralty evils which might arise from such a practice as that, and at their instance I took the matter up, but never had much doubt as to what the remedy should be. A Committee, however, was appointed to inquire into the subject, and we have now decided to make these payments by means of post office orders at the post-office nearest which the wives live, so that the old system, with all the evils which perhaps accompanied it, has now been swept away. Hon. Members for dockyard towns always have a great many questions to raise. I do not know that I shall be able to deal with many of them at this stage; they are generally questions that belong to Vote 8, and there will be plenty of time for discussing them on that Vote. The normal way in which the men approach the Admiralty is by petition; the proper and respectful way of dealing with their grievances is on their own petitions; at all events, that is the way we propose to deal with them. Those petitions came in about a fortnight ago; I regret that in the interval I have not been able to look into them; and, therefore, I shall not be able to make any statement about them now. But there is one question that has reached such a point that I am compelled to allude to it; and it is one that interests not only Members for dockyard towns, but also every town in which there is a large engineering firm. A delicate and difficult controversy is now raging between the two most important trades employed by the Admiralty—I refer to the dispute between the fitters and the shipwrights—as to the demarcation of the work between them. That dispute has spread from the dockyards to allied interests outside—they have taken up the cudgels for one side or the other. We have repeatedly had petitions from dockyard men on the question. More than that, last year engineers or fitters in outside yards, introduced by various Members I see before me, had interviews with my colleagues and myself. More recently the shipwrights in the outside trade had a similar interview. Both deputations made suggestions or proposals tending to a compromise or settlement; but, as those proposals are not in a final form, perhaps I ought not to allude to them specifically. Substantially the same suggestion comes to us from both quarters; and the effect of it is that the Admiralty should settle this question by one of its own officers, and that he should have such assistance as may be necessary to enable him to ascertain the real truth. These suggestions are still in an informal shape, and therefore I will not say more about them. But, speaking for my colleagues and myself, I will say that we have no desire whetever but to see this thorny controversy settled in such a way that the members of the two trades shall work in harmony in the future, and, further that certain smaller trades that have similar grievances should have their grievances considered and settled at the same time. The Admiralty, as such, has no preference for one line of demarcation more than another; all that it desires is to see this question settled; and any feasible plan for such settlement will have our sympathy, and, as far as we can give it, our support. But it must be distinctly understood, with reference to some petitions, and also to what has been written in private letters, that the Admiralty have no fault whatever to find with their existing staff of shipwrights. It is due to them to say that, because it would be a reproach to us if we kept men in our employment who were not fit for their work. In the next place, while I have expressed our indifference or impartiality as to the future line of demarcation, it must be distinctly understood that, whatever line of demarcation may be agreed upon for the future, it shall not be put into execution at the cost of the discharge of any of our existing staff. We must hold by the principle by which we have held so far, that when we have good men we want to encourage them by making their employment permanent, because permanent employment is more valuable than high wages without permanence. Finally, whatever settlement is arrived at should be a complete and final settlement, settling the controversy once for all and with reference to all the men concerned. I will now proceed with what I have described as the most conspicuous feature of these Estimates—I mean the great programme of works, which we submit with the fullest sense of responsibility. Will the Committee permit me to make a few comparisons with the object of showing that works have been comparatively neglected while the Navy has been expanding in all other directions? I am not complaining of that; but an impartial critic would say—

> "This you ought to have done, but you ought not to have left the other undone."

What I want to say is that, while men and expenses and capacity have increased, the Works Department has not increased. In order to be quite impartial as between Party and Party, I have taken a period which covers four Administrations—a period of ten years. Ten years ago the total Navy Estimate was just over £12,000,000, and we are asking this year for £18,000,000, an increase of 50 per cent. Ten years ago the number of men was a little over 58,000, this year we are asking for 88,850. Finally, ten years ago the tonnage of ships afloat, building, or completed for service was 692,000 tons, and this year the corresponding tonnage is 1,300,000 tons, showing that in that respect the Navy has doubled in the 10 years. I take no account of the £10,000,000 not in the Estimates for contract work under the Naval Defence Act, and in which the Works Vote had no part. What was the state of the works all this time? Ten years ago the

Works Vote was in all respects about one-half of what it is now — it was £517,000. In succeeding years it went on meandering to £468,000, £451,000, £417,000, £448,000, £380,000, till it took a leap last year, when the Works Vote, higher than it had been for a quarter of a century before, was £650,000. It is quite impossible that a stagnant and stationary Works Vote should be adequate to the requirements of a fleet expanding in all directions. Our ships have increased in size, and the Works Vote has to provide for docks, harbours, waterways, and for barracks for the men. When the Works Vote has been almost stagnant while the fleet has gone on swelling enormously, a *prima facie* case is made out for some fresh proposal. I have omitted to mention the introduction of a new weapon of naval warfare, the torpedo, which has changed many things. One very important fact is that the torpedo has made the ancient anchorages of the British fleet no longer tenable, and provision is now demanded for closed harbours—harbours closed by impassable physical barriers where torpedoes cannot be used with safety. For obvious reasons I may not go into actual particulars of possible changes, but at least it will be admitted that we must provide safe anchorages, otherwise our men will be worn out with continually watching against this insidious enemy. I have indicated some of the things that are to be dealt with in this new part of our programme. We want more docks—a point made by the hon. Member for Gateshead, who now cheers my statement. While the fleet has shown enormous expansion during the last 10 years, in the essential element of dockage there has been very little increase. We have tried to find out what new docks could be forced into the account for the 10 years. One at Devonport was finished in 1886; another at Haulbowline was finished in 1888. One at Malta was finished in 1892. This small percentage of new docks is all that we have to balance the enormous increase of the fleet. [" Dry docks?"] They all are. The scheme submitted provides for docks, the completing of harbours, the completing of waterways and barracks—in other words, the programme to which I ask the attention of the Committee is intended to provide for the better housing both of the ships and of the men. Last year we felt it to be our duty to lay certain proposals for new works before the House of Commons, and they were sanctioned by Parliament. The First Lord of the Admiralty told the House and the country of the Loan Bill which will be introduced as soon as these Estimates are disposed of, and which is intended to carry out this Programme. I think it will add to the clearness of my statement if I ask the Committee to bear this in mind; the works we propose to provide for by loan fall into two classes. There are first the specific works sanctioned by Parliament last year, which are enumerated in the Parliamentary Paper, presented to the House last year, No. 216. Although the works have been already sanctioned, very little was said about them last year, and therefore I may be permitted to say a little more about them now. The second class of works consists of works not mentioned hitherto and now put forward for the first time; but both these series of new works we intend to provide for by the financial method stated by the First Lord. I will take these works in turn. The following are the works we propose to deal with. First of all there are the docks at Portsmouth. There are two docks now building at Portsmouth, which will be of the largest size and capable of accommodating the largest ships. The date of the completion of these docks will be the end of 1896, and the work is being done by private contract. The total amount to be provided for the Portsmouth dock is £245,000. I am now describing the loan programme, those new works which are to be provided for by the financial method described by the First Lord—that is to say, by annual Bills for loans. The next item is the Gibraltar mole and dock. With regard to Gibraltar, the works contained in the Parliamentary Paper to which I have referred include two things, the further extension of what is called the new mole and a new dock. This new mole, about which so much has been heard, is a very old mole indeed, much older than many people have any notion of. I have looked up its history, and I find that the new mole was begun just exactly 275 years ago. It has been gradually extended to its present length of 1,400 feet, but the work of extension was stopped, I believe, in 1880. Those who have read the proceedings of what is called the Gibraltar Committee may remember a statement made by Lord Brassey, who then held my office, that he bitterly regretted that he had, as civil Lord, advised the discontinuance of the extension of the mole. The work, however, was resumed in 1892, when a contract was made to extend the mole by 700 feet, and that work is now going on by private contract. Last year we obtained the sanction of Parliament to a further extension of 1,600 feet, and, in in order to push on faster, this addition of 1,600 feet is to be carried out by local labour under Admiralty officials. The cost of this will be, I think, £85,000. This is the Gibraltar item, including the proposals sanctioned by Parliament last year. I have, however, further proposals with regard to Gibraltar which are totally new. I have divided the new works to be covered by loan into two classes—namely, those sanctioned by Parliament and those which have not been before Parliament; and as to Gibraltar I am giving those actually sanctioned by Parliament. The next thing I have to mention is the item for deepening the harbours and approaches at Portsmouth, Devonport, and the Medway, which has been rendered necessary by the increased size of ships and the increased need of harbour accommodation. The cost of this will be something like £80,000. The next item is a small one—namely, the Extension of the Engineer Students College, with a view to providing more accommodation for students. That will cost about £35,000. Then there are the Marine Barracks at Walmer, where additional accommodation for 500 men is to be provided at an estimated cost of £20,000. Then there are the Naval Barracks at Chatham. What we propose to do at Chatham is to build new Naval barracks, at a cost, I think, of about £360,000, on the site of the old convict prison, providing accommodation for 3,500 officers and men. In doing that we are making such use of the existing buildings as may be practicable. Designs have been prepared, but the plans for the designs are not yet complete. Now as to the question of policy in this matter—the policy, I presume, of the late Board and the policy of the present Board is that those men should be housed in barracks rather than in hulks, for the following reasons. First of all, on sanitary grounds, I may also say on social grounds and on the ground of the men's comfort, it is better that they should be housed in barracks rather than in hulks. Another reason is this, that we want the room of the hulks; we want to employ for actual service ships the room in the harbours now occupied by the hulks. The last item of last year's programme is an enormous one. It is the Devonport Quay and Dockyard extension at a cost of £2,000,000. This great enterprise has long been before the Admiralty, and the conclusion they have come to is that, having regard to the important position occupied by Devonport, to the enormous number of ships now resorting to it, and to the deficient accommodation for them, it is absolutely necessary that the dockyard should be extended. We propose to effect a great reclamation work. A great deal of land is to be reclaimed, and in the space so reclaimed there are to be one great dock—three ordinary docks with entrances into two basins—and another dock of a smaller size. There will be a tidal basin on the right-hand side of eight acres, and a basin on the other side, the four docks lying between, the area of which will be 33 acres. The total areas of the new basins will therefore be 41 acres. Then provision will be made for the coaling jetty, which is really an old work, and on the land reclaimed new shops and buildings will be erected. This is the work which the House generously sanctioned after a very imperfect speech made by me last year just before 12 o'clock. I have here a plan of the work, which I promised the noble Lord opposite (Lord G. Hamilton) should be placed in the Tea Room of the House. My right hon. Friend near me (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) calls my attention to the fact that this plan provides an area of 35½ acres for the back basin instead of 33 acres. These seven heads constitute the works programme of last year, and now I come to new works for which we have not yet received the authority of Parliament. The first of these new works is the proposed breakwater at Portland Harbour. What has taken place there is this. We ordered to be laid down a line of dolphins between the two sides of the harbour, and the dolphins are now almost completed, there having been a little delay in consequence of bad weather. What remains to be done will be merged in the new programme. The plan of laying down dolphins was adopted because it was compatible either with the construction of a continuous breakwater or of boom defences between the piers of dolphins. But further consideration led to the conviction that Portland Harbour could only be protected against torpedo attack by a continuous, insuperable, physical barrier, and not by a mere boom defence, which might be mistaken for narrow waters, The construction of a continuous breakwater between the two shores is, then, our policy, and it will cost £700,000, and we propose to complete the work in 1905. I will now complete the story of Gibraltar. I have already spoken about the extension of the mole and the new dock, and what we now ask the Committee to assent to is a further extension of the mole. It is not to be a continuous but a detached mole, and there will be an opening for ships into the harbour. The new mole will have a length of 3,200ft., and the expense is estimated at £700,000. The object is to construct an enclosed harbour at Gibraltar like the enclosed harbour at Portland. The area is to be 260 acres at the five-fathom depth. That is the proposal as it exists in the minds of the lords of the Admiralty at the present moment, but we leave the matter open to some extent. What we do, then, is to make provision for a breakwater 6,910ft. long, with an interval between the two sections of it. The northern limit of the area which we propose to enclose will, according to the present plan, be protected by lines of dolphins with boom defences. That is estimated to cost £50,000, but may not after all be necessary, for there are projects now before the authorities at Gibraltar and the Colonial Office for the construction of a new coaling pier, which, if built, will close in the northern position of the area which I have described, and so make it unnecessary for the Admiralty to incur the cost of laying down dolphins. I trust that I need not state again the general reasons why an enclosed torpedo-proof harbour at Gibraltar is necessary. The next item in the programme is one of possibly still greater interest to the House and country—I refer to Dover Harbour. The policy of the Board of Admiralty is the same here as at Portland and at Gibraltar, and it is conceived to be necessary to provide a torpedo-proof harbour at Dover also. The subject of a harbour at Dover is, as was said last night, an old story. In 1844 a Commission reported in favour of the construction of a harbour which should partake of the nature of a harbour of refuge, and the suggestion that such a harbour should be built was linked to proposals for the erection of a convict prison. There have been various vicissitudes in the history of this scheme, but the crowning disappointment which its promoters suffered was in 1886, when the patriotic intentions of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer were frustrated by the unwillingness of the House of Commons of that day to entertain the proposal. I cannot make out what became of that Motion. I only find Progress was reported on it, and nothing more seems to have been heard of it. Now my right hon. Friend has the great privilege, nine years after, of being able to find the money for the scheme. I will not go into the strategical reasons why a harbour at this place should be necessary· I think it desirable to avoid statements touching foreign nations, which must be kept in mind though they need not be expressed. I would assume that the Committee understand the reasons why this great work should be necessary. Now, we propose to follow the line of the Commission of 1844 in the plan of the harbour. Part of the work may be said to be already executed in the Admiralty Pier, with which hon. Members are doubtless familiar. The Admiralty Pier extends to a length of 2,150 feet, and the extension we propose to make will be 3,100 yards, or 9,300 feet. [An hon. MEMBER: "Additional?"] Additional. Of course before the Loan Bill comes on ample information will be given to hon. Members.

MR. J. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): What is to be the space of Dover Harbour?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: The total space will be about 320 acres, but at the five-fathom depth of about 270 acres. All the works I have mentioned—those that were enumerated in the Paper last year, and those that have never been enumerated before till I mentioned them on this occasion—all these will be in the Loan Bills, but they will not be in the first Annual Loan Bill; and, as at present advised, it will not contain the name of Dover Harbour. We do not take money for Dover Harbour in the first Loan Bill, because we believe we shall be able, out of the ordinary resources, to undertake the preliminary surveys, which would require a large amount of time in any case, so that I hope there will not be any delay at all. I may be asked, Why do you not put Dover Harbour into your first Loan Bill? How do you distinguish between that and other works you are going to put in? I distinguish it in this way. Dover Harbour, Portsmouth Barracks, the Hong Kong Extension, are all absolutely new in this sense, that we have no works going on at these places—Dover, at all events, we have no works of this sort going on at the present moment—whereas elsewhere we have always works of some sort or another going on. The three items which do not appear in the first Annual Loan Bill are distinguished from all the others by the features I have mentioned. Now I come to Portsmouth Barracks. At present progress cannot be furthered on that scheme because there are certain difficulties and delays. We are going to take over the Anglesey Barracks from the War Office and convert them into Naval barracks. We are going to provide for the War Office new barracks in substitution for the Anglesey Barracks. The War Office will build them and the Navy Votes will pay the expense. The cost of this work is put down at £615,000. The last item of all is Hong Kong. I totally despair of being able, from the plan before me, to convey an idea of the nature of the improvements that are going to be made. That part of the world has been conspicuous for some time past, and recent events have certainly not lessened the importance of Hong Kong as the only Naval station belonging to Great Britain on that side of the North Pacific. We propose to reclaim about six acres. In that space we have a small basin area, which I estimate from the plan at about two acres. Then we shall have a deep-sea jetty—that is to say, a jetty with 30 feet depth of water—and a pier, so that the biggest ships in the Navy shall be able to come alongside. We do not propose to build a dock at Hong Kong, as there is a dock suitable for our purposes only about a mile and a half away. Now I have finished the enumeration of the works.

*LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): What is the total amount of the whole?

MR. ROBERTSON: The proposals previously sanctioned by Parliament are roughly about £4,500,000. The new proposals which I have just enumerated are about £4,200,000. The total which we propose to meet by way of loan in the manner specified is about £8,700,000, or very well on to £9,000,000. All the works I have named—those which were sanctioned last year, and those which I hope will be sanctioned this year—have, I maintain, the character of permanent works. They are all, in our opinion, absolutely essential to the defence and security of the Empire. Moreover, they are works which are not subservient to the period of their construction, and on all these grounds we have decided to ask Parliament to consent that the expense of these works should be provided for by loan. The loan has special features. In the main it follows the precedent of the Fortifications Act of 1860 and following years. It will be provided for by annual Bills. The first of these will be introduced in a few days. The annual Bills will provide for the instalments required for the work anticipated during the following year. The charge will be made a distinct charge upon the Navy Votes, so that year by year, this item of Naval expenditure will be open and obvious to everybody,

MR. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, Burghs): For how many years?

MR. ROBERTSON: That is the last point. We propose that the loan should be paid by terminable annuities for a period not exceeding 36 years. I have only one word to say in conclusion. I alluded, I hope, in no spirit which may be taken amiss by the noble Lord (Lord G. Hamilton) and hon. Gentlemen opposite, to the Naval Defence Act, for which they were responsible, but there has always seemed to me to be a great defect in that Act—it is a defect of spirit rather than of structure—namely, the distrust and want of confidence at the policy displayed in the House of Commons. Sir, I have never been one of those who doubted the House of Commons. If I had been, the events of this short Session would have reassured me. Already this House has read, in the great Indian Debate of two or three weeks ago—which I refer to with no party *animus* whatever—a memorable lesson to all its detractors. On that occasion, neglecting Party interests, neglecting Party considerations and provincial interests, it rose to the full height of its Imperial responsibilities. Sir, it is in reliance on that sound and, I believe, abiding instinct, that I now beg on behalf of the Admiralty and the Government, to submit these Estimates to the favourable consideration of the Committee.

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON : I am sure that I may, on behalf of the Committee, congratulate the hon. Gentleman personally on the statement which he has made. Not only has he given us a clear and comprehensive statement, showing full knowledge, and marked by lucidity, which I am sure the Committee will appreciate, but I go a little further, and, accepting for a moment the financial ways proposed and means by which the expenditure is to be met, I take that statement as an entirely satisfactory one. It is to my mind, of all the three statements made by the present Board of Admiralty since they came into Office, the one most characterised by comprehension, by prescience, and by thoroughness. I propose to follow the hon. Gentleman through the points he dealt with. Speaking of the Naval Defence Act, he said that Act implied distrust of the House of Commons. The hon. Gentleman has made a complete statement as to the intention of the Government in relation to the works necessary, as to docks and so on; but when he is asked to tell us the intentions of the Government as to providing ships to go to these docks, he declines, because, he says, if he were to do so, he should imitate the bad practice of the Naval Defence Act, which betokened distrust in the House of Commons. But if a Government produce their full Programme, if they give the whole feature and design of every ship they propose to build for five years, and if they submit that Programme to the exhaustive criticism of the House of Commons, and embody it in a Bill, that, so far from showing distrust, shows complete confidence in their scheme and in the House of Commons. If your scheme is to be carried out by your annual Bills, and is to be on the lines of the fortification schemes which, 30 years ago, were submitted to Parliament, let us hope the same untoward result will not attend the expenditure upon the docks which attended the expenditure upon the fortifications. For over 20 years these forts were without guns, and it was not until my late lamented Friend, Mr. Stanhope, took the task in hand, that these forts were in any way made capable of defending the coasts of this country. That only shows the danger of entrusting to the fluctuations of public opinion the prosecution of great works of this kind. Lord Spencer, in his statement, assures the House and the country that the five years' scheme, one year of which only has been announced, remains unchanged. Why is it necessary for Lord Spencer to give this assurance? The presumption is that there was an attempt made to change the scheme during the past year, and I congratulate the Admiralty on the success with which they defeated that attack. But it is inevitable, so long as we follow the practice of invariably selecting the Prime Minister and Leader of this House from one Department of the State—namely, the Treasury—and giving them supreme control over the spending power, that they will try and squeeze the spending department in times of financial depression. So long as that practice remains, so long is it necessary that those who wish to insure stability and consecutiveness in our Naval programmes should let the whole scheme for shipbuilding for a period of years be known to the public and be put in Acts of Parliament. What we are afraid of is not that the House of Commons will refuse any money a Government will ask for, but that the underhand interference of the Treasury will prevail in times of popular excitement, especially when a Party is on the verge of a General Election, and its fortunes are a little on the wane, and the opportunity presents itself of making a popular Budget, by reducing expenditure.

It is not fair to contrast the results of the system established by the Naval Defence Act with the shipbuilding which is now going on. What we have to compare it with is the system which it superseded. What was the position of affairs before the introduction of that Act? Our dockyards were more or less in a state of disorganisation, our battleships took five, six, and seven years to build, constant alterations were made in their structure, and the average excess in the cost of the ships over the Estimates was between 20 and 25 per cent. In many cases the ships, when completed, were not provided with guns, and when the guns were provided there was no ammunition. By the Naval Defence Act an attempt was made not only to do all that was necessary for building ships, but to arm and equip them. This great scheme had been carried out in the short period of five years. True, it is said there was an excess over the Estimates of £700,000; but two deductions have to be made from that excess. There was an increase of wages during the period in the dockyards which accounted for £200,000, and we were also compelled to add the cost of steam launches and pinnaces and include them in the equipment of the ships. The ordinary votes were relieved by the amount then added to the expenditure under the Naval Defence Act. If we deduct these two extra sums we find that the excess under the Naval Defence Act was a little under half a million, or less than 2½ per cent. over the original estimate. I think the Committee will therefore admit that the result of that experiment has been eminently satisfactory, and the rapidity of the building which characterised that programme was the origin of the remarkable progress which during the past three years has attended the building of ships that have succeeded those built under that Act. To the manning Vote I give unqualified approval. There is a great addition to the number of officers and men, but I am afraid, large as that addition is, an increase quite equal to it will be found necessary for three years, and I will say why. The total number required to man the ships under the Naval Defence Act was 21,500, and it was calculated that there would be a relief of 5,000 men from crews of vessels which

would have become obsolete at that period. But as we went on we found it necessary to increase the Estimates to the original complement, and many vessels we thought would be obsolete we renovated and re-armed, and the total number of 21,500 was required. The increase made during the five years to the estimates of men was 15,000, and therefore at the conclusion of the Naval Defence Act the ratio with which trained men stood to the ships which they had to man was about 7,000 worse than at the commencement of the Act. There was a large addition made to the Naval Reserve. That was our position, and I calculate that the ships which the late and the present Board have laid down, up to the commencement of the present financial year, will require just about 12,000 men to man them. It is a curious fact that the addition which the Admiralty have made for this year and the next year to the Manning Vote is just 12,150. Therefore we shall be at the end of this year still 7,000 men to the bad compared with what we were some 12 years back. I calculate that the ships proposed to be laid down this year will require 6,000 men, so that, looking to the future, I think it is clear that at least for three years to come an addition of 5,000 or more will have to be made to the Manning Vote. If that is done, and the Naval Reserve raised from 27,000 to 30,000, at the end of three years we shall have approximated our resources in men to the ships they have to man. Fortunately we shall have a certain breathing-time in which we can make these increases. I find in 1892–93 there were 115,000 tons in the way of completed ships added to the Navy; in 1893–94, 170,000 tons; in 1894–95 only 25,000, and this year only 6,000 tons will be added, exclusive of the torpedo boats. The amount of tonnage for last year and this year will not be great, and the Manning Vote ought slowly to creep up and approximate to the requirements of the materials. These figures illustrate what I said yesterday—namely, that the increase which is made in one year in the shape of completed ships for the Navy cannot, in any way, be judged by the expenditure of that year. Two important difficulties with which the Admiralty have to deal are the shortness of the engine-room complement and the deficiency in the number of lieutenants. The number of additional stokers is 4,000, and in that respect I think we stand in a fairly good position. I should like, however, to know whether steps are being taken to create a reserve of engine-room artificers. I am confident it can be done by either offering facilities to engineers working in the factories of the country to place themselves on the reserve list, or by making it necessary for engineers in the dockyards to go afloat for short periods of sea service. But the chief difficulty arises from the shortness in the number of lieutenants, which was seriously aggravated by the reduction which took place 15 years ago. It takes 10 years to make a lieutenant, and it is not easy to say how we are to make good in the immediate future the existing deficiency. I should be very reluctant to suggest that men should be brought in from outside, for such a step would doubtless give rise to much objection on the part of those who devote so much time and study to qualify themselves for the position. At the same time, if the step were advised by naval officers of great reputation I should be ready to acquiesce in it. But if the number of lieutenants is increased, it will be necessary to increase in proportion the number of officers superior to that rank, and I am glad to see that the Admiralty have recognised this point. I observe with satisfaction that there is to be an increase in the number of warrant officers and chief warrant officers. I hope the Admiralty will be able to associate with this increase of chief warrant officers, some name in rank which will indicate that these officers are commissioned officers. I know there is some difficulty in finding a suitable name, but I think the difficulty may be overcome, and I am sure such a step would give immense satisfaction to the Navy. With regard to the recruiting for boys, I believe the Admiralty have done right in trying the experiment of sending the *Northampton* round the ports of the United Kingdom, and I hope, if that experiment is a success, it will be continued. I also approve of an additional training-ship being stationed in Ireland. I am glad to find that the experiment of naval barracks has also proved satisfactory, and that experience justifies the observations which have been made by the Civil Lord on the matter. Passing to the votes for material, the progress that has been made with our battleships has been not only remarkable, but phenomenal. I observe, however, that, whilst a large additional sum has been spent on the vessels building at Portsmouth and Chatham, there has been a considerable reduction in the sums proposed to be spent on the two vessels at Pembroke. I cannot understand the reason for delaying the progress of the *Renown* at Pembroke, for I regard the *Renown* as one of the most effective ironclads we are building. In regard to the 10 ironclads that are on the programme for this year, three of the ten were on the building programme of the late Board of Admiralty in 1892–3, and since then we have lost the *Victoria.* If these are deducted, we have, therefore only six remaining, or an average of two per annum since 1892–3. I do not think this is sufficient to keep up our naval supremacy over the other two leading navies of the world. I estimate that they have 28 first-class battleships to our 26. Besides this, they have a considerable number of effective coast-defence vessels. I would therefore suggest that in place of the four first-class cruisers which it is proposed to build we should build two battleships of the type of the *Renown*, three of which could be built at the cost of two *Majestics.* This question of battleships has become more important in the light of the experience of the engagements between the fleets of China and Japan. I believe that many taught have missed the real lessons critics by the battle of the Yalu. The Japanese had every advantage in the shape of faster vessels, heavier guns, officers better trained, and more efficient men; notwithstanding which, the Japanese cruisers were unable to put out of action two Chinese ironclads of only moderate dimensions, while a single shell from an old-fashioned Chinese gun, in one of the oldest ironclads, struck the Japanese flagship, killed and wounded 30 men, and put the ship out of action. The lesson taught by that battle was that, however efficient a cruiser may be for attack, it cannot stand the hammering of an ironclad. Whatever great naval battle is fought in the future, the nation which has most ironclads will have the advantage, and, therefore, it seems to me to be necessary that all quarters of the House should press on the Admiralty the advisability of reconsidering their programme, and of substituting battleships for cruisers. Turning to the question of the designs of the vessels it is proposed to build, I fear I must express dissatisfaction. There are to be four first-class, four second-class, and two third-class cruisers. My objection to the first and second class cruisers is that their design is distinctly of a retrograde character, inasmuch as they are to be shorter and broader than the vessels that have preceded them. If one fact has been established more clearly than another it is that the increased length tends to increased speed. There had been a steady increase of length in proportion to beam of recent years, but now we are going to build more cruisers of the *Blenheim* class. The hon. Gentleman explained this retrograde design on the ground that the vessels were to be special-service vessels. I protest against special-service vessels. Our great danger, if ever we become involved in a great war, will be that we shall have to operate over an enormous area, and that no human ingenuity can foresee the suden concentration of forces which in different places may occur; and the only method by which we can counteract such dangers is by keeping our fleet homogeneous and mobile. But special service means that a vessel is told off for duty in a certain locality, and that means a deduction from the general sea-going power of the Navy. We have given up building coast-defence vessels for that reason. Some years back the *Hero* and the *Conqueror*, vessels of light draught for shallow water, were built. They have taken part in naval manœuvres, and have been associated with first-class battleships, and on one or two occasions they upset the whole plan of the Admiralty, because they could not keep pace with the first-class ironclads with which they were associated. Therefore, it seems to me a great mistake to build these short vessels on the ground that they are intended for special service. The first function of a cruiser is speed, and I do not believe that these short, stumpy vessels can develop great speed. Moreover, it is essential that a large gun or two guns of moderate calibre should be placed well forward, but a vessel with a fine end has not the necessary buoyancy. I make a proposal to which I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give attention. The cruisers are to be built by private firms. My hon. Friend the Member for Belfast (Sir E. Harland) last year made a remarkable speech attacking the Admiralty designs. I have as great a belief in the genius of Sir William White as any living man, but my hon. Friend speaks as one of the most successful shipbuilders of modern days. He was the pioneer of that particular form of vessel known as the Atlantic liner. If these cruisers are to be built by private firms, I would suggest that firms of the standing of that of my hon. Friend should have a free hand in the design. Nobody at the Admiralty can obtain the information which the owners and builders of these Atlantic liners possess as to the various conditions under which they have to be forced against a head sea, for these vessels are compelled to proceed at full speed in all weather. These private firms being the repositories of this special knowledge, why should we not apply to them and give them a free hand under a schedule of prices if you like? I believe the result would be most valuable. We should be able to test one vessel against another; and although it might cost a few more thousands of pounds, I think the result would be of the greatest possible benefit. I venture to make that suggestion because it seems to me a practical one, and, inasmuch as these designs are not complete, one that can be adopted. I should like to say a word as to the question raised last night by my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead. My hon. Friend attacked the Admiralty for having adopted water-tube boilers. If anybody was responsible for the introduction of these boilers it was myself, and I will state my reasons. An extraordinary improvement has taken place in marine engineering in recent years. But the improvement in boilers has not in any way corresponded to the improvement in machinery. Various experiments to get increased boiler power into torpedo-catchers have not been successful, and therefore it seemed to me that when a firm of high repute guaranteed efficiency for three years it was worth while making the experiment, and the ship entrusted to this firm has been a very great success. My hon. Friend drew a pathetic picture of the terrible dangers to which anyone was subject who went on board a vessel with water-tube boilers. I have been on board such vessels, and I believe a water-tube boiler is just as safe as any other boiler, provided it has been properly manufactured and is properly managed. The mistake made in this matter arose because the Admiralty had to put out a very large number of torpedo-boats all at once, and they were compelled in consequence to distribute them over many firms who had never built a torpedo-boat before. All the accidents that have occurred were in the work of firms who had no experience of this particular class of boilers. Therefore, I cannot blame the Admiralty. I think they were right in continuing experiments as regards water-tube boilers. They have put them into two of the largest cruisers ever built, and if the result justified that experiment no fault could be found. The hon. Gentleman did not allude to Lord Spencer's statement concerning the work of the Ordnance Department during the past year. That seems to me to be one of the most satisfactory features in this statement. I gather that the whole of the ships built under the Naval Defence Act, with one exception, are now provided with quick firing guns. If that is the fact it reflects the greatest credit on the Ordnance branch of the Admiralty, and proves that it is immeasurably better that this branch should be under the Admiralty than that it should be under the War Office. I hope, in considering future proposals to transfer from the War Office to the Admiralty those duties that belong to the latter, the House will remember that every such transfer that has hitherto taken place has been followed by good results. I now turn to the Works Vote, and I must say that the proposals of the Government are not wanting in audacity. But there are two works that ought to have been included. The first is the continuation of the buildings of the Admiralty themselves. If it be necessary to provide increased accommodation for ships and men at distant parts, it is much more essential to provide that the brains of the Navy have a fit and proper habitation. If we were engaged in a serious war to-morrow, one of the great difficulties that would be encountered would be the dispersion of the officers of the Admiralty all over the West End of London. Surely, if we are going to spend all this money at distant out-ports, we should at least take care that the officials responsible for the administration of the Admiralty are properly housed.

Mr. ROBERTSON: I would point out that the Admiralty has nothing to do with expenditure for Admiralty buildings.

*Lord G. HAMILTON: No. But I think the House of Commons has. If it is necessary to provide so large a sum for public buildings on the ground of urgency, we are entitled to point out that this matter is equally urgent. There is another omission—unless Pembroke is to be shut up, it ought to be made a general fitting and finishing yard. The utility of Pembroke would be great in time of war. I am certain that a good deal of the work sent from Pembroke to Devonport to be completed is badly done. It is for this reason I would make Pembroke a finishing and fitting yard. It has the advantage, at any rate, of being impregnable from the sea. I will reserve till another occasion the observations I have to make as to the financial expedients by which the money is to be raised. It does not matter to the Admiralty one straw from what source the money comes so long as they get it. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer has enjoyed himself in the past in mounting to high altitude of financial purity — I might say, of financial prudery—and in holding up to us poor sinners who proposed to spread a small portion of a very large sum over a few years; whereas, it is now proposed to raise by loan a sum of something like £9,000,000 or £10,000,000, and to spread it over a period of 30 years. It is curious to note some of the "permanent works," the expenditure of which is to be raised by loan and repaid by instalments. One of the largest items is "dredging." I thought I would find out what dredging had cost in the past, and what it was going to cost in the present year. I find that in 1893-4 it cost £41,500. That was the year in which the Estimates were reduced to the lowest point. Last year it cost £196,000; while this year it is down on the Estimates for only £9,000, the balance of the cost of this item being transferred to loan account. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, on a former occasion, ridiculed the advice which the late Chancellor of the Exchequer and I gave him, but I think our method of meeting the increased expenditure was preferable to his. I reserve to myself the right, whenever the Loan Bill comes up, to make further observations upon that point. I can only say, in conclusion, that, however much some of us may differ on other questions, we are all united in desiring a strong and progressive Navy. The Admiralty, in the statement they have put before the House, have given us an earnest of their determination to do their duty. I only wish they would take us fully into their confidence; but, feeling that the Admiralty are acting with that determination, we, for our part, will readily co-operate with them in their laudable and, I trust, successful efforts to raise the British Navy to a higher standard than before.

*SIR E. HARLAND (Belfast, N.) thought it incumbent upon those who might fairly claim to have a little knowledge of nautical matters, either to state their approval of the programme placed before the Committee, or to give their reasons for differing from the programme. He would not trouble the Committee, at the length he did last year, in going into the details of his objections to various classes of vessels sought to be constructed; but, as the vessels now proposed were much of the same class in their relative proportions to those which he then criticised, he felt that he ought to again enter his protest against a continuance of construction of what he felt to be a very faulty class of vessels. He did so from a very considerable experience in dealing with vessels which fulfilled seven-tenths of the qualifications recognised as essential in a battleship, be it an armourclad or a cruiser; and he asked the Committee and the Admiralty to pause before committing the country to becoming the owners of ships which, he was certain, would, before three or four years, be found to be very deficient, and inferior to the vessels which might then be constructed. The *Majestic* and her sister ship were a decided improvement upon some of their predecessors, but, at the same time, they seemed to be deficient, not only in economy in regard to the amount of machinery put into them, but also by reason of their coal endurance being very deficient. In war time our battleships and cruisers would require to carry many days' supply of coal, not only for themselves, but for the numbers of torpedo boats and torpedo catchers which would accompany them, and which would need to be supplied almost daily with coal from the larger vessels if the fleet were required to proceed at any great speed. He regretted that no experiments were made in last year's naval manœuvres in coaling the smaller vessels from what might be termed their parent-ship in a seaway. Such experiments would have been invaluable. In time of war, operations of that kind might have to be performed in very heavy weather. It was essential that our war-vessels should be of such length and so modelled and designed as to be able to carry not merely their own supplies of coal in their bunkers proper, but that they should also have coal holds for at least 1,000 tons to supply the small fry which must necessarily follow the larger ships. He contended that they could not ensure anything like that quantity in ships of the proportion which were contemplated. He regretted that some second-class cruisers were to be even shorter and broader than their predecessors. That was a step backwards. The Admiralty should have sought further evidence as to the desirability of constructing vessels of greater proportionate length, and he thought they seemed to undervalue the qualities which had been found so essential in the merchant service. He was certain that the constructors of our warships had a great deal to learn from the mercantile marine, not only in the modelling of vessels, but also in reference to the machinery put into them. He had felt great interest in listening last night to the remarks of the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. Allan) upon the subject of underboilering and other deficiencies in machinery. He believed that one of the chief reasons why not only the war vessels of to-day, but the merchant ships of 20 years ago, failed in having sufficient boiler power applied was that the vessels were too short. To-day, in the Navy, they were too short to give sufficient accommodation for satisfactory boilers. Therefore, they had not only a deficiency of space in the vessels of the Admiralty type today for giving such vessels suitable boilers, but also suitable machinery. If they added to that the extremely defective arrangement of the bunkers, compelling them to have watertight doors through one bulkhead or another they would see the danger to a vessel at sea. He thought that was another defect resulting from the war vessels being too short. Everything was so cramped up for want of length that the bunker arrangement was not only insufficient, but it rendered it impossible for the Naval architect to arrange the bulkhead divisions so as to reduce the chances of the vessels sinking to a minimum. He would only refer, in a word, to the sad case of the lost *Victoria*—a loss which arose entirely from her defective dimensions. If the Naval architect had 100 feet more in length to deal with, he would have been able to arrange the bunkers so that there would not have been that difficulty which was experienced as to the closing of the doors when the catastrophe occurred. When they read an account of one of the new battleships or cruisers being launched, they were told that they were minutely subdivided, but on examination they discovered that all these minute sub-divisions were simply a network, or, in other words, that the subdivisions were run into each other, and were of such a nature that the doors must be constantly kept open. He considered that such minute divisions were a complete fraud. He was also convinced that on this question of sub-divisions the present Board of Admiralty and the constructors had now data before them that they had not before them a few years ago, but he was sorry to find they did not avail themselves much thereof. He was glad the Mercantile Marine had availed themselves of the information, and he now took the opportunity of pointing out to the Admiralty the importance of far more complete and perfect sub-division of the battleships with a view to the safety of the vessel. He thought that before they proceeded farther they should have some assurance on this point. He was very pleased, indeed, that at that hour of the evening (7.10) so many Members were present to take an interest in nautical matters, When they considered the vast sums of money cheerfully granted to the Navy in order to strengthen their first line of defence, it was evident that every year the importance of the question would increase. Last year he was told that these were technical points. Well, they certainly had a technical speech last night from the hon. Member for Gateshead. Nine-tenths of the time of the House were taken up in discussing purely legal phraseology, and he thought the remainder might be given up to what were called technical matters. They often heard of hon. and learned Members, but there were many ways of being learned besides learned in the law. The Navy was year by year growing in importance, and considering the vast sums annually voted, and then the country committed to the ownership of the vessels for 20 or 30 years—if they were not sent to the bottom—the question could hardly be looked upon with disfavour. He was glad to support the remarks of the noble Lord as to the 42 torpedo boat catchers. He thought it was beyond human power and beyond engineering capabilities to produce one vessel so perfect that it would be wise at once to repeat that 42 times over. If there was one class of vessel which required to be protected—as they had learnt from the war in the East, where the Japanese had shown marvellous pluck in manœuvring these vessels—it was the torpedo boat and the torpedo catcher. He thought that greater care should have been exercised before the order for the 42 torpedo boats was given. He was very much disappointed as to the second-class cruisers, which were to be 320 feet in length by 57 in breadth. He thought that this was decidedly a step backwards. With reference to repairs, he said that a point had been called to his attention in going through one of the dockyards the other day. He found that the Sultan, which was being repaired, had actually seven inches of timber bolted on to her sides in order to make her stiffer, and to enable her to stand up to her guns. In his opinion that was about the most backward step which it was possible for any dockyard to take. If the vessel had been lengthened 50 feet, say, as an experiment, he was convinced that they would have found the experiment of immense advantage. In connection with the graving docks, he asked for information as to the length of the dock at Portsmouth as well as at Gibraltar. He maintained that the size of the graving docks in future should be made not only with a view to accommodate the vessels of Her Majesty's Navy, but they should also be sufficiently large for the naval cruisers. Arrangements had been made by which the Government could have the use of some of the largest ocean-going steamers in case of war. The House should remember that these steamers, when they came into the service of the State, were not armour-clad, and were likely enough to be injured, necessitating repair. Even their propellers might be disabled, and in his judgment, therefore, the graving docks should be constructed by the Admiralty at least as large as would accommodate the largest existing cruisers, and probably the merchant cruisers of the future. He should be glad, therefore, if the Civil Lord would tell the House what was to be the proposed size. In order to simplify the matter, he had no hesitation in saying that such a dock should not be a foot less than 800 feet in length—probably 700 feet would supply the wants of to-day—and 90 feet in width, and there should not be less than 35 feet of water. The great advantage of a long graving dock was, that they could dock two ordinary proportioned vessels of to-day at the same time; and as the cost of the graving was due to the breadth, the general entrance to the dock, and the pumping of it, more than to the length, he thought the making of it 200 or 300 feet longer was a small matter compared with the dock as a whole. It would be a mistake, therefore, to construct a graving dock less than the dimensions he had indicated. In this connection he might refer to the Mersey Docks, and other docks for the mercantile marine; and if hon. Members examined those docks they would find that the length he had indicated was by no means an extraordinary length. Most docks were of that length, and he could not too strongly impress on the Admiralty the desirableness of making the dock at Gibraltar of the dimensions he had suggested. He was pleased to hear his noble Friend (Lord G. Hamilton) refer to the raising of the standard of engineers and the engine-room artificers. He was also glad to hear the very favourable view entertained by the Civil Lord on that question. He was convinced that just in proportion as we heaped duties more and more on the engineers of the Navy, so must we place within their reach the posts of honour and the posts of dignity. The time was coming when the Navy could afford perhaps to lose one of her captains sooner than one of her engineers. On this subject he should like to express a practical view which he entertained with reference to the training of young engineers. He had observed at Keyham that there was a method of training young men in one shop, and under the superintendence of one man. He advocated rather the separation of these young men, one from the other throughout the different shops, because by their separation they became more associated with the workmen from whom they were to derive all their instruction. Their knowledge of the work was not imparted by the foreman to these young men, but rather by the workmen with whom they, for the time being, were allied. In his judgment, therefore, these young men would be better trained, and be rendered more proficient workmen if they were scattered through the shops and separated from each other—if they were allowed to see more of the various classes of engines made, and were allowed to mingle more among the workmen themselves. With reference to the types of ships, he was convinced that, looking to the number of vessels designed for various purposes, we possessed a sufficient variety of ships to be told off for different classes of work without our voluntarily building them for a special service. In his judgment it would be an error to build a vessel shorter or broader in order that it might be enabled to go through some extra class of evolution, because even in the merchant type of vessels the twin screws obviated any difficulty in manœuvring them. If the Admiralty were to build now a short and broad ship in order to enable it to be more easily manœuvred he thought it would be casting away all the value of the longer vessel. He hoped, therefore, that we would not continue to design our vessels as if they must be handled with a single screw, as if we had yet to learn of the marvellous facility with which the twin screw vessel could now be manipulated.

*MR. H. E. KEARLEY (Devonport) expressed the great appreciation felt by the wives of the seamen and others who were now enabled to draw their allotments in a more satisfactory manner. It was also satisfactory to have the explanation which had been given as to the new works and the carrying out of works in hand. He wished to know how long it would take to complete the students' college at Keyham. It necessarily happened that until Keyham was extended the Admiralty would not be able to get an adequate supply of trained engineers. He believed that great advantage accrued from having Naval barracks instead of depôt ships, the sanitary condition of which was not satisfactory. He was glad that the Admiralty had undertaken to provide a suitable dock at Gibraltar, the necessity for which had been urged on the Government by several deputations. With regard to the harbour at Dover, the Civil Lord congratulated himself that he was the first to begin this work. But this work was not to be begun this year, and no one knew what would happen to the right hon. Gentleman politically next year. He thought it was suspicious that this work had been put off at all; and he did not see why it could not be taken up at once. The statement which had been made as to the increase of the pay of engineer officers was very satisfactory; the proposed addition of £9,000 to the Vote seemed to be a handsome contribution. Though the great grievance of the engineer officers in respect of the separate mess at Greenwich was removed, there still remained another grievance in respect of their rank. The assistant engineer was promoted to be engineer at the age of 26 years; and then he ranked with, but after, the lieutenant, whose promotion was given at the age of 22. There had never been social equality between the engineering and the executive branches; and some consideration should be given to this question of rank. It was not until the engineer had reached the age of 30 that he attained the full status of the lieutenant. As to engine-room artificers, the Admiralty had been endeavouring to attract engineers by advertising and by reducing the qualifications; and they had, in consequence, introduced men who had not, in the opinion of competent judges, the qualifications which many of the engine-room artificers possessed. There should be some improvement in regard to the rating of these artificers. The claim was stronger now than ever, because the Civil Lord had told the Committee that the chiefs were now to have the advantage of jumping from petty officers' to officers' rank. He thought that the best of the engine-room artificers ought to be able, after 10 years' service, to obtain warrant rank by examination. The weakest branch of the engine-room staff were the stokers. The stokers were grossly underpaid, and their work was excessively hard; and the Admiralty had had considerable difficulty in even filling up their numbers. But the Admiralty were rather inclined to say now that the stokers could have no great grievance, because their numbers had been filled. This was not a question of quantity so much as of quality. He had noticed in a railway waiting-room an Admiralty advertisement for stokers, inviting boys of 18 to enter. The life in the stokehold required very strong physique indeed; and, seeing that men were asked to enter at 1s. 8d. a day, it was not surprising that well-seasoned and matured men were difficult to get. During the last 25 years the pay of the chief stokers had been 2s. 5d.; and only in the last year had an increase of 1d. a day been made. The quality of the stoker was not what it should be, and the result would be that when, in time of war, ships were worked at full speed for several days, the engine-room must break down. Besides, the complement of stokers was far too low; and to keep the engines continuously at full speed would require watch-and-watch work for the stokers. The time had come for the case of these men to be taken into consideration. It was useless to increase the attractions to the Service for the engineer and the engine-room artificer unless the stokers were of the right quality. With regard to the status and pay of the warrant officers he pointed out that these men got their warrant rank at 27 years of age now, on an average; and there was no other step of promotion open to them until they reached 50 years of age. They asked that promotion should be quickened by enabling them to get the rank of chief at 37 years of age, and after a further ten years' service, at 47, there should be created a new rank which they themselves suggested should be called Fleet rank. The noble Lord the Member for Ealing, when he was at the Admiralty, made a statement which was generally considered by the warrant officers as indicating an assent to at all events some of the suggestions that had been put forward, and he believed he was in sympathy with their demands. He, when First Lord of the Admiralty, after a careful consideration of this question, was strongly in favour of granting this Fleet rank and quickened promotion, and they had been given to understand—not by word in the House, unfortunately—that this would be granted. But there was no reference to it in the Estimates, and he wanted the Civil Lord to state whether he meant to meet this legitimate demand. By granting this he would be benefiting not merely this class of men, but everyone in the Navy, from the boys upwards. There was another matter to his mind, of special importance, and that was as to the manner in which certain skilled trades employed in the Navy were treated. There was by no means an equality of treatment meted out, as there should be, to those possessing an equality of skill. He would illustrate his complaint by mentioning the position of Naval Shipwrights. These men were recruited from shipwrights outside, either from the employment of private firms, or from the Government Service itself. In civil employment they were recognised as one of the highest and most skilled branches, but on entering the Navy they descended to a level altogether below that which their mechanical status and skill justified. Whereas an engine-room Artificer entered the Navy with a rating of Chief Petty Officer and 5s. 6d. per day, the Naval Shipwright was entered as a leading seaman with 4s. per day. The holding of this inferior rating subjected him to work and association which he felt to be derogatory to his status as a skilled mechanic. For example, he messed with those who were on no footing of equality with him, so far as mechanical training and proficiency were concerned. He had to assist in his turn in cooking, also in cleaning the mess, and what was far worse, he had to take his share in the work of scrubbing decks. Surely these were not fitting duties for a skilled mechanic to perform. He hoped that his hon. Friend, the Civil Lord, would see his way to removing this anomaly by giving Naval Shipwrights improved status and pay. Another subject to which he would refer briefly was that of the Pensioners employed in the Reserve. There were those of the Dockyard Reserve and those of the Fleet Reserve. The first of these received as wages a sum amounting to 16s. 11d. per week, which included an allowance for provisions: but the men in the Fleet Reserve were in receipt of 1s. 6d. per week additional pay. But they were practically engaged upon the same class of work, and frequently working side by side. The grievance had been represented to the Admiralty more than once by the Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth and Devonport. However, the Admiralty in reply said it ought to be taken into consideration that the Dockyard Reserve Pensioners were in receipt of higher pensions. But the pensions were gained by years of youthful service to the country, and in his opinion it was distinctly dishonest for the Government to make this a pretext for subjecting these men to a lower and inadequate wage. With regard to the white clothing of Marines who embarked for foreign service to tropical countries, he desired again to draw attention to the inequality of the new Order. Under it those men who embarked for the first time were provided with a free supply, which previously was not the case. But, strange to say, this concession was not made to apply to those who were embarking for a second period of foreign service. He contended that such a distinction could not be upheld, and he understood the Admiralty were favourably inclined to meet him on this point.

Mr. G. WYNDHAM (Dover) said, in regard to the works at Dover he had, the previous night, been able to put a question, thanks to the courtesy shown him, before the Civil Lord spoke, and he did not abuse the opportunity then given him. The Civil Lord, in speaking that afternoon, had dropped the phrase "as the Government are at present advised." He had already heard one piece of advice on the subject from one of his supporters, and he hoped similar advice would be tendered again and again to him. The Civil Lord had offered no argument whatever for excluding Dover, and, he might add, Hong Kong, from the scheme of the Government. The hon. Member had told the House that there was a distinction—namely, that no works were at present being conducted at Dover, but that works were being conducted at Gibraltar and at Portland. He saw the distinction, but he could not see what argument the Civil Lord founded on it. The Committee might not remember that the House passed a Bill—he believed in 1892—authorising the construction of a harbour at Dover, and that harbour was in process of construction. It was quite true that in England we had a great deal of capital and enterprise, but he did not think we could afford to waste the one or discourage the other by springing these plans on the House of Commons, and then not proceeding with them. It was only fair to the people at Dover, and the capitalists who had embarked money in this scheme, that they should know whether or not the Government was really going on with this harbour. He should like to know if this question was again indefinitely postponed. As it was, it was postponed *sine die*, and he felt almost tempted to move a reduction on the Naval Estimates, on the ground that they ought not to increase the value of their property so long as they did not complete an insurance which they thought it wise to make in order to protect that property; but he was so thorough an admirer of these Estimates that he would not do so. But on an early occasion, he should have to urge upon the House the advisability of including not only Dover, but Hong Kong, it might be for a nominal sum, but in order that the sanction of the House might be obtained to the scheme as a whole.

Captain BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) thought the schemes of the Admiralty would require a great deal of money, but the hon. Gentleman and those associated with him should be congratulated for having so boldly undertaken what was an essential and a necessary task; and their boldness almost amounted to audacity when one considered the means being taken in order to provide for the payment of that work, and recollected the criticisms which of late years had been passed upon the method of obtaining money. No doubt all of the works which had been indicated were of great importance; but for his part he attached the most importance to those which were to be undertaken at Portland and Gibraltar. The extension of the mole at Gibraltar was of primary importance, and he was inclined to think that second to that work was the enclosure of the bay at Portland. The Admiralty had been wise in reconsidering the position they took up last year in regard to the latter, because it was capable of being made one of the finest harbours in the country. He, however, did not intend to go closely into the details of that work, but should pass on to the question of ships and men, which was more applicable to this vote. There was nothing more satisfactory than the change which had taken place all over the country in the opinions of people with regard to the position which our Navy ought to occupy. Ten or 12 years ago it was an extremely difficult thing to excite interest either inside the House or out of it on Naval questions, and that was at a time when the Navy had reached one of the lowest points it had reached for years. Now, however, both Parties vied with one another in the endeavour to place our fleets in a better position for meeting those of other countries, and putting the Navy generally on a better footing for performing its duties in case of war. Still, he should never be persuaded to believe that we could obtain the best possible value for our money until we adopted a somewhat different course from that which was now adopted. He was not one of those persons, however, who thought that every question connected with the Navy could only be discussed advantageously by Naval men. On the contrary he held the opinion that in all great Naval questions civilians who had given their attention to the matter had opinions quite as valuable as those of Naval men; but as regarded purely professional questions, he should naturally prefer to accept the opinions of Naval officers as being more valuable than those of civilians. In his judgment, we ought to settle questions of this kind by first of all coming to an agreement on the general idea of the kind of vessel most suited to our needs, leaving out all minor details; and this could be done only by obtaining a consensus of professional opinion. Last year he pointed out mistakes that might have been avoided if professional opinion had been more largely consulted. Again, the need for consulting professional opinion was manifest. To enable the Naval Lords to get the best ideas of what was required they should be assisted by a larger number of men drawn from different ranks in the Navy. When a general idea had been in this way arrived at, then it would be for the constructors to say how far that general idea could be carried out. From the fact that neither last year nor this year was it proposed to build any of the smaller ironclads, it almost seemed as if that class of vessel was about to disappear from the Navy. But there were times in war when it would be exceedingly desirable to have the smaller sort of ironclad, in the construction of which we must abandon some of the qualifications of a larger vessel. This was a question that might be considered by a Committee of professional persons; and the country would be more satisfied if the question was decided with such assistance. We were going to build some more second-class cruisers, which were to have high speed and great coaling capacity; but they were to have an increased draught of a foot and a half; and that was a serious matter considering how often in our history we had been placed in difficulty owing to our ships drawing so much water. A Committee of Naval officers might well consider whether the present draught of these vessels was not too great. Again, in the Estimates provision was made for torpedoes; but we did not know exactly what the design of the vessels was to be; and we required professional opinion to decide what the size of these vessels ought to be. From the nature of the case, civilians could not appreciate the difficulty and danger of driving these light vessels at a high speed in rough weather. Many shipbuilders failed to remember that in the Navy alone you require to have ships not only handy and swift, but ships that will turn in a short space and with

great rapidity. One of the most important functions of a man-of-war was turning power and rapidity of manœuvring; and this was too much left out of account by Naval architects. One reason why we did not excel in these points was, that they were not required in the mercantile marine, and therefore, did not receive much attention.

*Sir E. HARLAND asked how the hon. and gallant Member accounted for the marvellous manœuvres which the *Hornet* and other vessels had been able to go through although their length was ten times their breadth?

Captain BETHELL said, he did not profess to argue a technical question, but simply looked at the matter as a civilian and argued that the country ought to have the satisfaction of acting on the best professional opinion that could be obtained. On the question of boilers, too, the Admiralty ought to have the best advice that engineer could give. It was natural in such a Debate, to turn to the Naval actions in the war between China and Japan. Frankly, he did not think we could learn much from them from a Naval point of view. As regarded strategy or tactics he doubted whether we should discuss them very much. As to the behaviour of modern ships in action, it might be said that ironclads stood an immense amount of hammering from comparatively light guns without being seriously damaged; and heavy ironclads fired away with heavy guns, inflicting, as he understood, very little damage. In general action torpedoes seemed scarcely to have been used at all. A ram, if it had been used at all on one occasion, had left it doubtful what had happened to the vessel attacked, and it appeared that in this general action three or four ships got on fire. There was another fact which was particularly interesting. The ironclads engaged were, he believed, armoured amidships only, with a protected deck, and he understood that the superstructure of these vessels, fore and aft, was fired into a good deal, and their stability did not seem to be at all affected.

*Sir E. J. REED (Cardiff): The unarmoured parts were very short.

Captain BETHELL said, that if that was so, it certainly made a difference. Still it was a fact that these unarmoured vessels were hit by a great number of projectiles, and still retained their stability. There had been much discussion as to the usefulness of torpedo boats, but it was perfectly certain that that had taken place in real warfare which mimic warfare had shown might be expected to take place, namely, that torpedo boats could attack large vessels at night with every chance of success, though in the daytime men-of-war seemed to have been able to pursue and overtake them. These facts were of undoubted value as far as they went, and it had seemed to him desirable to mention them. He turned now to comment for a moment upon the statement of the First Lord. In the earlier part he found a paragraph which was very satisfactory, seeing that it dealt with a matter that had been raised by Naval critics year after year; and that was that in the Mediterranean and elsewhere the supply of coal and ammunition had at last been increased. There was no doubt that the supply had for some time been so narrow that it was doubtful whether there was more than enough to fight a single action. That was a very bad state of affairs, and it was very satisfactory to know that it had been remedied. Turning to the final subject he wished to mention, namely, the manning of the Navy, it was quite obvious that in consequence of the great extension in shipbuilding in recent years, the question of the manning of the Navy had come into prominence. Last year an experiment was made, by which it was hoped to get a certain number of men direct from the Merchant Service. He regretted to find that that experiment had failed. He had heard one or two gentlemen, in the course of the Debate, say that it was doubtful whether that experiment, carried to any extent, would be satisfactory. He thought that was a mistake. The fact was, that in a war of any duration we should have to go outside for men, and he wished they could know why that attempt had failed. He must own that he did not know whether he might presume to criticise the part the shipowners played in this connection; but why was it that men would not join? Was it because there was not a sufficient number of men? He had heard shipowners complain over and over again that they could not get Englishmen to serve in their ships, and he had asked himself how this unfortunate state of affairs had come about, and he had been forced to wonder whether the fault did not to some extent lie with the shipowners themselves. Had they no responsibility in that matter? That was all he would say on that subject, and even that was drawn from him by the failure of the experiment of last year. He was extremely glad that the experiment of getting boys of an older age into the Service had been found practicable. What was the number of men required at present for the Navy he was unable to say. It was said last year that all our Coastguard, and all the men employed elsewhere, would be about sufficient to man the ships we then had, and he imagined that the number of men now put down in this year's Estimates would be barely sufficient to man the ships we now had. It seemed obvious, then, that for some years we should have to go on increasing the number borne on the books. He was glad to see that the Admiralty did not seemed disposed to let this matter slide. There had been a good deal of discussion about engineers and artificers. The hon. Member for Devonport was anxious to persuade the Civil Lord that the engineers suffered a great grievance at this moment from the fact that they had not precisely the same rank as the executive officers. The hon. Member said that it was absurd that skilled men like engineers should not rank with the executive officers. He would remind the hon. Member that the very seamen themselves were skilled men. There must be an Executive in the Navy to command, and surely those persons who by degrees were climbing up to the command must, by the very nature of the case, rank above the rest. It was perfectly true that the engineers had great responsibilities, and ought to be encouraged in every possible way, but that was no reason why the position of other officers should be prejudicially affected. Was a knowledge of navigation, of torpedoes, of gunnery, nothing? It was absurd for hon. Gentleman after hon. Gentleman to get up and say that the whole business of the Navy depended upon the engineers. He was most anxious that those officers should receive just and generous treatment, but he could not allow the observations respecting them which had been heard that night to pass without comment. The hon. Member for Devonport had spoken of engine-room artificers and shipwrights as being skilled men as compared with ordinary Naval men. That was not fair to the latter, for the men in the Navy were highly trained in the use of weapons and in other respects. It was not fair to say that, because a man came under the designation of skilled artificer, it was beneath his dignity to associate with men who had equally good, although different, qualifications. In conclusion, he congratulated the Admiralty upon their programme of public works, and assured the Civil Lord that the Estimates submitted would receive his general support.

Sir JOHN BAKER (Portsmouth) thanked the Civil Lord, and the Admiralty, on behalf of many thousands of Service men for the extreme care and attention which they had given to the representations made to them. Within his recollection the legitimate demands of the Civil and Naval Services had never before been responded to more generously than during the past three years. Very courteous attention had been given to the suggestions made, by the representatives of Naval constituencies, and he wished specially to thank the Civil Lord for the extreme fairness with which work had been distributed between the Naval ports and dockyards. Employment in those great centres of activity would now be secured to the workmen for some years to come. The announcement made by the Civil Lord respecting the payments to seamen's wives had given him very great satisfaction. The difficulties in the way of effecting improvements in matters connected with the administration of the Navy were not caused by the political officials, but were mainly raised by the permanent officials of the Admiralty, who had stereotyped views as to what was essential for the Service. He thought he could easily show why it was difficult to obtain engineer officers at the present time. He had met hundreds of chief and petty officers, and they had convinced him that while there was nothing like disloyalty to the Service there was discontent among them. The case of warrant officers had been brought to the attention of the House year after year and yet their grievance had not been met. One reason for this was the extreme indisposition to change felt by the executive officers of the Service, who thought that if the warrant officers' wish to attain a higher position were granted the prestige and discipline of the Service would be jeopardised. There was, of course, no ground for such an idea. In the Army men could rise from the ranks and obtain commissions, and why should not the same legitimate ambition be permitted to men in the Navy? Then the chief petty officers were discontented, because neither in respect of status nor pension were they in as good a position as sergeants in the Army, and because they were subject to the punishment of being deprived of their rating at the will of the Commander of a ship. The average pension of a chief petty officer was £33, whereas a sergeant's pension was £36. Then the sergeant in the Army attained his rank in three, four, or five years, while the petty officer rarely reached his position in fewer than 10 or 12 years. He was, therefore at a disadvantage as compared with the holder of the equivalent rank in the sister Service. But the disrating question caused the most dissatisfaction. At the mere caprice of an officer, who might be neither good-tempered nor judicially minded, a petty officer might be punished for some trivial offence in a way that affected him for life. In case of alleged offence let there be suspension for a short time, and then let the man be tried by Court Martial, as in the Army. They might be told that this course could not be adopted, because it was necessary to maintain discipline, but experience proved that discipline could be maintained without severe punishments. There was another cause of discontent. A petty officer after 19 years of very good service forfeited 1d. a day off his pension if the last year of his service was only "good," and another 1d. for not having the medal. In these cases a man had no appeal, and yet might suffer life-long loss merely because he was not appreciated by his commanding officer during the last year of his service. In regard to seamen pensioners in the dockyard, they had a grievance because, in consequence of their having a pension, their wages were reduced 1s. or 1s. 3d. per week below the regular rate. That was a grievance which rendered the service unpopular. If there was a reason for a difference in wage for dockyard work as between seamen pensioners and ordinary labourers, the difference was all in favour of the pensioners, because a man who was an "A. B." was one of the most skilled workmen that could be employed, and there was no justice in reducing his pay because he happened to be a pensioner. There were other classes of men employed under the Admiralty that he entreated the Civil Lord to give some attention to, such as painters and those employed in the stokeholds of Her Majesty's ships. He knew dozens of cases in the last year in which good men had suffered grievously in health and their prospects of life shortened by reason of the nature of their employment. Their wages were too low. Painters in the Navy during the last 20 years had only had a rise of 3d. per day in their wages. It was no answer to say that these men had willingly accepted the conditions of the service. The question was, what was the risk of danger and suffering which they incurred? The stokers should be paid according to the work which they gave; yet they received 2d. per day, on re-entering the service for a second period, below that which ordinary seamen received. The petty officer received an advance upon re-entry of 2d. per day. Why was that denied to the chief stoker? There should be equal advantages and equal pay and position for these men, who were as essential to the service as any class in the ship.

Mr. G. W. WOLFF (Belfast, E.) said, that in view of so many Members wishing to speak, he should confine his observations to the part of the programme which he best understood, namely, the shipbuilding programme. A great deal, however, had been said about the engine-room artificers not being put in a proper position, and his hon. and gallant Friend seemed to think their case was being pushed too far. He did not think so. He thought that the education given to the engineer officers as distinguished from the other officers in order to fit them for their professional duties, ought to fit them socially for the higher rank to which they aspired. He was exceedingly pleased to hear of the enormous increase in the stokers and artificers in the Navy. It seemed to him the number of these men must have beenvery short hitherto, seeing it was necessary to get so many in one year. But taking into account, not only the want of extra ships, but the extra engines and machinery on board each ship, he did not know that even now the number of stokers and artificers was sufficient. Stress had been laid on the fact that the class of ship ought to be determined by professional advice. He supposed that his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Holderness by that meant the naval officer, and not professional shipbuilder or engineer.

Captain BETHELL: Certainly not.

Mr. WOLFF apologised. He was going to say that so far as concerned the class of ship wanted, the guns required to be carried, armour and coal endurance, these were questions that ought to be settled by naval officers; but when it came to a question of how that ought best to be done, the naval officers ought to stand aside and let the engineer come forward. With regard to the length of ships, the great difficulty about the construction of ships now for the Navy was to build them so as to carry the enormous and ever-increasing weight put upon the ship. From that point of view he thought it very unfortunate that the Admiralty should have thought it necessary to shorten the second-class cruisers instead of lengthening them. The same laws as to carrying capacity which governed a merchant ship applied to a man-of-war, and he knew that the shorter they made their ship the less she would carry. As to the question of tubular boilers, so far as his professional knowledge went, they had no advantage over the ordinary boiler, except that they were a saving of weight. He was far from sharing the alarm of the hon. member for Gateshead that the Belleville boilers would blow up, but he would like to impress on the Navy the unwarrantable experiment they were making with these boilers. He never heard of any merchant company that would at once apply these boilers to the whole of the ships they were going to build. But every one of the ships mentioned in the naval programme—second-class cruisers, third-class cruisers, torpedo-catchers—every one was to have the Belleville boiler. Surely this was risking too much. He thought the Admiralty were making a most hazardous experiment in putting one particular boiler, recommended by a French company, into every one of the ships in their naval programme. The only reason given in favour of these boilers was that they saved a certain amount of weight. He had been told that they possessed one advantage, which was the easy manner in which they could be repaired. But that was really a very trifling advantage, as they were constantly getting out of order, and it would be far better and cheaper at the outset to put in a boiler that did not want such frequent attention. He hoped that the Admiralty would not too rashly make an experiment with these boilers on a scale so large as to practically mean ruin to the efficacy of the Naval programme. Turning again to the question of the length of the vessels, he remarked that the hon. and gallant Member for Holderness assured them that a short ship was able to turn much quicker than a long ship. That was true of old times, when ships used to fight broadside. But in the first place they had now got twin screws, which made it very much easier to turn a ship than formerly; and in the second place, when they had fired the guns in one direction, they did not then need to turn the ship because the turret in which the guns were placed could be turned. A long ship which had twin screws was quite capable of turning as quickly as was necessary. He was aware that this would be heresy to the hon. Member for Cardiff, but still, this was his own conviction speaking from his knowledge of the subject.

*SIR EDWARD J. REED (Cardiff), observed that he was sorry the hon. Gentleman who had last spoken, had rather challenged him, because having spoken the previous night he felt indisposed to rise to-night. He thought however, after the very able manner in which the Civil Lord of the Admiralty had acquitted himself under unexpected circumstances, it was only fair he should receive a little technical and professional support in opposition to some of the criticisms which had been so freely made. With reference to what had been urged by the two hon. Members for Belfast, he was a little surprised that they should be quite so ready to judge of the work of the designers of the Admiralty from their own experience in designing ships which were of such a totally different character to those of the Navy. He thought that the Admiralty showed, by the Minute of the First Lord, that they were just as capable as his hon. Friends of appreciating the value of the length of a vessel when they were able to resort to great lengths for the purpose of speed untrammelled by other considerations. In the statement of the First Lord, particulars were given of certain classes of vessels. The first-class cruisers, they were told, were to be generally similar to the *Blenheim* type, which was not short but a ship of not very great proportion of length to breadth. The second class were to be exceptionally small in their proportion, but then the Admiralty gave them another class in which the length was to be 300 feet and the breadth only 36½ feet. He doubted whether either of his hon. Friends would take any exception to that class of vessel or if they did, whether they would take it wisely. This illustration clearly showed that, when the Admiralty had no other thing to consider than the attainment of great speed, they were as ready as his hon. Friends to give a large proportion of length as compared with the breadth; and with all deference to them and their experience, he believed there was more than one officer in the Admiralty who knew equally as well as they why great length should be resorted to, and when. What astonished him was to observe how completely his hon. Friends dropped out of their minds the immense difference between a Transatlantic liner and a first-class cruiser. The first-class cruiser had to do that which the liner had not to do at all, namely, to carry a very large amount of weight poised up high above the water. The Admiralty had to seek and provide the necessary stability to carry these upper weights consisting of guns and other cumbrous things. The Atlantic liner had to carry very little weight above the water. There was no one who appreciated more highly than he the splendid services which had been rendered to the Mercantile Marine, by the large firm represented by the two hon. Members, but he ventured to say that if they were to put these upper weights which a first-class cruiser carried on to one of their ships, she would topple bottom upwards and be lost. The hon. Members allowed the question of stability to fall completely out of their consideration. Of course, he knew they could design a very long ship, and enable it to have stability and do all that a first-class cruiser had to do; but what he said was, that they could not, because of the length get rid of the breadth, and if they had the long ship which the hon. Members desired, coupled with the breadth which the upper weights rendered necessary, that meant that they must have a much larger and much more costly ship than was necessary for the purposes of the Admiralty. The question of handiness had been referred to, and he had heard, not without astonishment, the statement of the two hon. Gentlemen as to the handiness which twin screws gave to a long vessel. Had his hon. Friends forgotten that a warship must keep moving whilst she kept turning? But with twin screws they would have one screw bringing about the turning by driving the ship ahead, and the other by driving it astern, and so far as the head-motion was concerned, the one would neutralise the other, and they would get no speed at all.

Mr. WOLFF interposed the observation that there was such a process as that of one screw going faster than the other.

*Sir E. J. REED said, he had designed a number of warships in his time, and he did not know of any twin-screw ship which corresponded in the degree of handiness under the helm—except she derived it from the rudder—to the handiness of the single screw ships of the Navy. He had even heard of ships built by the firm of the two hon. Members which were very far from possessing the handiness which was absolutely essential in a ship of war. This might be the last occasion upon which he should take part in a general discussion upon the Navy Estimates. He agreed with the suggestion of the noble Lord opposite, that, with the object of bringing all possible knowledge and experience to bear upon the construction of Her Majesty's ships, the Admiralty might very well call upon his hon. Friends the Members for Belfast to submit designs from their point of view of a ship which should do all that a first-class cruiser was intended to do. He would ask the Committee, however, to give their confidence to the designers at the Admiralty in those matters until it had been shown that better designs than theirs could be produced to fulfil all the conditions and objects the Admiralty had in view in the building of Her Majesty's ships. He had been much surprised to hear the hon. and gallant Member for Holderness speak as if the designs of Her Majesty's vessels were really produced in some hole-and-corner way, and that the experience of naval men was not brought to bear upon them. He did not know what was the practice now, but he knew that when he had the privilege of designing vessels for the Navy, the designs he prepared were submitted to the naval officers at the Admiralty, and were sometimes sent out of the Admiralty and submitted to eminent naval officers at Portsmouth. The hon. Member for North Belfast had spoken about the desirability of greatly subdividing the torpedo destroyers, and he put the matter before the Committee as if he was propounding a very important and novel doctrine. He therefore implied that those boats were not subdivided. But they were subdivided, and it would be necessary to refer the hon. Member to a single instance to convince him how much he had failed to acquaint himself with what the Admiralty had done and were doing in those matters. He would doubtless remember the case of the boat *Lynx*, which, while on its way round from the builders to Plymouth, went aground on the rocks near Land's End in a fog. He believed three-fourths of the bottom of this long boat were penetrated by the rocks ; but, however that might be, it was a fact that no fewer than three of her compartments were thrown open to the sea by the accident. Notwithstanding, when the vessel was got off the rocks, she steamed round to Plymouth, and so little did she appear to be injured, that no one perceived, as she entered the port, that she was at all injured. If he had not referred to this matter, the Committee might have supposed that the vessels of this class had been very negligently designed, and were exposed to unnecessary risks. But the instance he had just given was a clear and convincing proof that the Admiralty had not neglected the question of subdivision in this style of ship. He thought it was to be almost regretted that competent and cultivated men in the profession of shipbuilding and engineering did not avail themselves of the facilities open to them for learning what was done, and what happened, in regard to Her Majesty's ships, so that injustice might not be done to the Admiralty and their designers in the course these Debates. He wished to refer briefly to a question which had received a good deal of notice, and which was introduced the previous night by the hon. Member for Gateshead in a vigorous speech. Now the hon. Member who spoke last had actually stated to the Committee more than once that he did not know what was the value of water-tube boilers as compared with the ordinary cylindrical boilers, except in one particular. There were, he thought, good reasons for the adoption of water-tube boilers. An ordinary double-ended cylindrical boiler would contain from 30 to 35 tons of water, and was ready to explode with terrible violence in the event of any disturbance from outside. Water-tube boilers, on the other hand, would not contain more than a tenth of that quantity of water. Surely that was an intelligible object to accomplish in a ship subjected to the blows of torpedoes and of guns. Then experience and science pointed to the necessity for increased pressure if they were to have greater economy. They had, however, gone as far as they could go with regard to pressure in the case of the cylindrical boiler, but in the case of the tubulous boiler they could resort to a much higher pressure. Still, he must say he was a little startled on reading the passage in the First Lord's statement that "it is proposed to adopt boilers of the water-tube type in the new ships to be laid down in 1895–6." That meant that the cylindrical boiler had already been laid aside in favour of a boiler of which they had not had very much experience. The hon. Member for Gateshead, with a forcibleness of delivery which would make any man believe almost anything, had spoken as if boiler accidents were unknown prior to the introduction of the water-tube boiler. But there had been many cruel explosions with cylindrical boilers, both in and out of Her Majesty's Navy. Then it had been represented as a terrible thing that the tubes should wear out so fast. He admitted that if that was permanent, it would be objectionable, although he did not think that the more rapid destruction of the tubes than of cylindrical boilers would of itself be a reason for giving them up. If they obtained advantages in other directions, they should be prepared to renew the tubes more frequently. He did not wish to express any strong or decisive opinion on the matter, but he believed the Government could not have avoided making a considerable and extended introduction of these boilers into the Navy. There might be difficulties, and even accidents, but they must make their tubes as they made everything else —competent for the work they had to perform.

MR. W. ALLAN (Gateshead): Why did the tubes burst in her Majesty's ship *Sturgeon*?

*SIR EDWARD J. REED: I have not the smallest doubt that the tube burst because it was unable to bear the pressure.

MR. W. ALLAN said the tube was tested at 1,000lb. per square foot, and afterwards at 290lb. The pressure at which the boiler worked was 200lb., and it did not register that pressure when the tube burst almost from end to end and the fatal disaster occurred.

*SIR E. J. REED remarked that it was a common thing for a tube which had stood a very high hydraulic test to give way under heat. His contention was that if one had a good object to accomplish one must not try to carry it out by insufficient means. He had no doubt that the remarks of his hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead would have great weight at the Admiralty. It was not a pleasant thing for a public Department like that to have such speeches directed against them; but at the same time they should not be unduly alarmed on account of the statements that were made last night, or because accidents had happened. His hon. Friend the Member for the Holderness Division had raised the question of small ironclads. When at the Admiralty he (the speaker) had designed small ironclads, but, so far from being idle like those mentioned tonight, his vessels were always in commission, and proved most useful. The argument would always remain that two small ironclads, while they could do something which one large ironclad could not do, would fail to do the work which the larger one could. The Government laboured, and would always labour, under difficulties in these matters. The noble Lord the Member for Middlesex complained that we had not enough of the large ironclads, though it was true that he favoured the *Renown* class in preference to the somewhat larger vessels. Other hon. Members favoured small vessels. Thus the Admiralty were between two fires. The matter resolved itself, then, into a question of expenditure, and depended on the judgment of the Admiralty and its advisers. Having spent many years in the House and borne great pains and affliction of mind in past times, through seeing the public money very improperly expended on vessels excessively imperfect and bad, he had applied his mind to the vessels now proposed, and he was thankful to say that, although he had taken exception to the first designs of Sir William White, he had, nevertheless, viewed with great satisfaction the course of his designs of late. He would defer any further remarks until the Shipbuilding Vote came under the consideration of the Committee.

Mr. A. B. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said that the Committee contemplated with regret the approaching loss of the services of his hon. Friend in these discussions. No one contributed more to the guidance of the Committee on the Navy Estimates than the hon. Member who had just sat down. If there was one thing more than another in which he felt a deep interest, it was that our ships of war in the future should not get into the same trouble as those in the past had done, and the matter which had caused most trouble was in regard to boilers. They had gone through a very serious ordeal in connection with the locomotive type of boilers. They then followed the Mercantile Navy in the Naval Defence Act, and there had been no trouble either with natural or forced draught in regard to them. Now the Admiralty were taking a great and new departure, and were doing so not on a small but on a large scale. Even the last speaker hesitated to pronounce a decisive opinion in favour of the Belleville boilers. Surely, then the Admiralty ought not to make this tremendous plunge into a thing which they had not tried themselves by placing them in these two large cruisers, each of which was expected to develop 25,000 horse-power, and also to place them in two other cruisers as now proposed. He should certainly raise this question again at the proper time. His hon. Friend said that in cylindrical boilers they had got almost to the maximum of thickness of metal. He gathered that the inference which he wished to convey was, that the Belleville boiler would give a higher pressure. He thought his hon. Friend omitted this point that, although the Belleville boiler did work under higher pressure at 220 to 250 lbs., yet they dare not compress that into the engine at a higher pressure than 200 lbs. Therefore all the rest was lost. It was admitted that if they passed it into the engine at a higher pressure they would have cleared the boilers out of water at the same time, such was the small amount of water that they contained. Until they had been fairly and properly tried, he thought it would be a great mistake for the British Navy to rest on the efficiency of these boilers. There were one or two other points with regard to which he wished to say a word or two. It was said that the great factor in this programme was the Works Vote, which amounted to no less than nine millions of money. They were asked to devote that to works largely connected with harbours. Was there any one subject more than another upon which greater diversity of opinion existed than with regard to the planning and designing of great harbour works? He thought before the Committee was pledged to the great works, which were embraced in that programme, they ought to have before them very full particulars of the plans and sketches of the different proposals. They should also be informed by whom these new works were designed, and what advice had been taken with regard to their position, location, and general arrangements. He took the case of Keyham Dockyard. He thought as regards the dry docks, the depth of water on the sill, the particulars would satisfy the Member for Belfast. The details as to size had been well thought out, but it struck him that the position in which the docks were placed, compared to the workshops, was not advantageous. He thought it might well be considered whether the docks should be at the north instead of the south end. Then, again, the shape of the basin did not lend itself to the mooring of vessels beyond eight or nine fair-sized craft; others would have to lie off in inconvenient positions. He did think that, before they embarked in a great work of this kind, they ought to have the fullest plans, and also understand the different points recommending them. As to the large expenditure over Dover Harbour, this was only another illustration of the uncertainty of the Naval mind. So remote was the contingency considered of having a Naval station or harbour there that sanction was given to a railway company to make a harbour there. Only a few months passed by and then there came quite a change over Naval opinions, and they were now launched in an expense of a harbour at Dover costing £2,000,000. He did not say it was not right, but he did say that they should give to this right-about-face, involving so large an expenditure, the most thoughtful consideration. There was one other work he should like to mention. He referred to the expenditure for the barracks at Portsmouth. He thought he caught the figures £615,000. It was proposed to take the barracks inventory, and give them to the Navy, and erect new barracks for the Army at the cost stated.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: At £595,000.

Mr. FORWOOD accepted that figure. He did not know how many seamen were to be provided for in the Anglesey Barracks, but the barracks for 800 men had been constructed for something under £60,000. That being so, he was very much taken aback by the statement that the new barracks were to cost something like £600,000. The hon. Member did not make any reference to some suggestions which he made the previous evening, particularly as to the policy of the Naval Reserve. The First Lord had said that the list at present was closed. He, on the other hand, had pointed out that the cost of the Naval Reserve men was exceedingly small, that the Reserve had now become popular, and he saw no reason why they should not open the list, and allow an increase to be made. It was much better in view of the large growth of our Fleet to take as reasonable a number of men on the Naval Reserve as they possibly could. Questions had been raised as to why there had been failure in securing enlistment. Last year he had pointed out that he did not think the pay of the Navy was half the pay of the men in the Merchant Service, and that men reared in the Merchant Service were not inclined to give up half their pay in order to join the Navy under a rigid and closer discipline. He should like to hear something more about the *Northampton*, and the object of sending her round the coast. He had been led to believe that the Navy could get any number of boys to fill their training ships at the ports. If that was the case, then what was the advantage of cruising around the coast in order to try to pick up boys who were a year older than at present? It would be far better to go on with the excellent system of taking the boys younger and educating them. As to the diminished amount taken for coal, he said that if there was one matter in the Navy which should be enforced, it was that the offcers and men should be practised in the movements of their ships. What the Navy lacked was sea-going experience, and sea-going experience at full speed. It was idle to say that 8¼ hours were sufficient to give men on board a vessel a proper experience of the manœuvring of a vessel at full speed. He believed that the House could not do better than grant the money which was to be expended in coal. Instead of the coal bill coming down, it ought to go steadily up. There should be more liberality with regard to the quantity of coal, and more liberty given to the Admirals at the different stations to keep the ships at sea in order to exercise them at full boiler power. He did not see any reference in the Estimates, moreover, to the contributions from India this year. In the last three or four years £100,000 had been taken as an appropriation in aid expected to be received from the Government of India as part contribution towards the cost of the Fleet which this country maintained in Indian waters. It had always appeared right and proper to him that the Indian revenues should contribute a reasonable sum towards the protection of the shores and the revenues of India. He had enquired into this matter, and he was satisfied that the Government of India would be obtaining the services of the ships on the Indian station at a very moderate cost for the £115,000 or £120,000 claimed by the Imperial Government. This subject was under friendly arbitration three years ago, and he thought that plenty of time had elapsed to allow the subject to be concluded, and to let it be known what the Indian Government were to pay towards the cost of the Fleet.

Mr. GEORGE HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) thanked the Civil Lord for some concessions which had been granted, with reference to the accommodation of the engine-room artificers, and expressed a hope that it would be clearly understood that they were not only to be permitted, but encouraged, to compete for the highest posts. The Navy were here dealing with a class of men who were admirably fitted for the higher posts, and every encouragement should be given to them to enter into the competition. He thought that some modification of the age limit should be considered, and urged that age and experience in the discharge of duties ought to stand for something in the examinations. Indeed, the experience these men had acquired ought to be the initial qualification for a higher post. The number of stokers was disproportionately large to that of the engine-room artificers, and there ought to be a full complement of the more competent men. He urged that the Admiralty should offer every opportunity and encouragement to these skilled men to compete for the highest posts open to them in the Navy.

Sir EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) said that one statement of the Civil Lord had surprised him. The hon. Gentleman appealed to the Committee to leave until Vote 8 the discussion of certain questions of pay and promotion. That invitation was not very tempting, because Vote 8 might not be reached until the end of the Session; but the hon. Gentleman said that the petitions sent in by the men of different ranks had only come under his notice about a fortnight ago, and that he had not given attention to them. These petitions, as a rule, were sent in in October in order that they might be considered when the Estimates were being framed; and if they were not to be looked at by the Admiralty authorities until the Estimates had actually been prepared, there could obviously be very little use in arguing the questions with the Admiralty. The men ought to know whether there had been a departure from the usual practice in this respect, because they were under the impression that their petitions were considered before the Estimates were framed. He entirely agreed with the hon. Member for Portsmouth with regard to the hardship to officers in being liable to be disrated without any appeal or any trial by court martial. He also agreed with the hon. Member as to the hardship involved in the regulation that the men who had served as petty officers for 19 years with good conduct, and who only got a G. instead of a V. G. in their 20th year, were liable to have their pension reduced. He hoped the Civil Lord would consider the two points which had been raised with respect to the engine-room artificers and the special rank for warrant officers. The concession made in allowing the artificers to compete for certain appointments would no doubt be appreciated; but it showed how little justification there was for refusing the concession which for years they had been asking for—namely, to have a warrant rank of their own. In 1888 there was a Committee which considered this question. There was no intervening rank between the artificers and the engineers, who were officers; and if a warrant rank could be given, it would be a great satisfaction to a body of men whose services were becoming more important every year. As to the warrant officers, the question of granting them a special rank came before the late First Lord in the last year of his administration, when there was no time to fully consider the question. But the noble Lord had expressed his sympathy with the desires of the men in this matter, and his opinion that some title could be found. They could not be called "Chief Officers," but they might be called "Fleet Officers." That title would be something to look forward to, and while boys were encouraged to enter the service, the men would not be disheartened by knowing that no further step could be taken by a warrant officer. If the petition of the men were not considered before the Estimates were framed, the men would be more likely to look for that public support in the House which had been referred to more than once, and which in many respects was not so satisfactory as the calm consideration by the Admiralty of the claims made.

*MR. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport) said, that he strongly dissented from the view taken by the hon. Member for Holderness, and agreed with the hon. Member for Portsmouth in respect to the position of the engineers of the Royal Navy. We had now got a mechanical Navy; and to put the engineers in an inferior position to the executive branch of the service, was to cast a slur on the former which was not warranted by the actual work. There was one point, the national importance of which he did not think the House realised, and that was the treatment meted out to the warrant officers of the Navy. It took less time to build a first-class battleship than to make an able seaman. We had got an adequate scheme for the building of ships, and we had already a considerable Navy, but we had not got the men to man them. It cost £300 to turn out an able seaman after being trained as a "boy" he joins as an "ordinary seaman" at the age of 18, and at the end of his 10 years has the option of re-engaging at once or rejoining within a year. A return dated 28th June last showed that in 1887, of the men who had served their 10 years, 24·2 per cent. did not re-engage at all; in 1888 the number was 32·4 per cent., in 1889 33·2, in 1890 32·4, and in 1891 33 per cent. This represented a grievous loss to the country, as the second 10 years of a man's service was of more value to the country than his first 10, and they might say fairly, considering that a man was not a full seaman till he was 21, that if they could induce a man to re-engage who otherwise would not have done so, we should have saved at least £150 a year. A few years ago, he would remind the House, the Secretary to the American Navy said that it was totally unnecessary to establish training ships for boys for the American Navy, because they could get any amount of the very best trained material out of the British Navy from the men who had not rejoined after 10 years' service. He did not think it could be doubted that one reason why these men did not rejoin was that we offered no career to a boy who entered our Navy. The highest point that a boy could hope to reach before he was 50 years of age was the rank of warrant officer, which he reached on the average at about the age of 28, and he could then go no further. There were certain appointments which might, he thought, be given to men in the Navy, and he would point out that the First Lord of the Admiralty in the last Government, in a speech made in the House, had said:—

"I think we might fairly consider whether we could not adopt some name to denote their position, and also whether we might not increase their number, and thus cause additional promotion. In addition to that, we ought to do our best in connection with the Ordnance Store Department and other departments, to comply with the warrant officers' request. There are a certain number of appointments held by commissioned officers at present which might fairly and legitimately be given to warrant officers of a certain standing. If, however, we cannot go so far as my hon. and gallant Friend would wish, he will see that we are prepared to look into this question in a kindly spirit, and to do our best to meet the wishes of this most respectable class of officers."

Since the delivery of that speech by the late First Lord practically nothing had been done, except the proposal had been made in the coming financial year for the appointment of 100 additional warrant officers, which would not get over the difficulty—it would only allow warrant rank to be reached quicker; but still they would meet that wall in front of them, the chief grievance they had. There were posts in the Naval Ordnance Department at Sydney, Simon's Town, Ascension and Bombay, now held by warrant officers without any increase of pay, although positions of the utmost responsibility. There were similar posts at home, where men had duties of the most responsible description to discharge, besides those the late First Lord had in his mind when he made that speech, and who only received the status and pay of warrant officers or chiefs; there were posts at Devonport, Portsmouth, Chatham, Esquimalt, and Pembroke, to which a similar remark would apply. Compare the position of such men with that of men under the War Office. An extremely striking instance was afforded. In October 1891, the Naval Ordnance Stores Department was taken over from the Army. There were at the time men in the Department who had entered the Army as privates, who had been promoted from the ranks—to the position of quartermasters, and these men were transferred to the Admiralty, so that actually under the Admiralty they were enjoying the rank and pay of lieutenants and captains in the Army simply because of this transfer from the Army to the Navy. Under their War Office appointments these men would attain to the pay of £350, with the addition of £50 house allowance. These men who were taken over had subordinate positions under naval officers; and there were naval warrant officers in charge of Naval Ordnance Depots abroad with responsibilities much greater than the Army men he had referred to, in sole charge and in each case performing their duties abroad, not at home, on rates of pay £100 or £150 less. Surely there was a good case for putting these warrant officers on the same footing, and offering them the same opportunity for a career, as men of a similar position had in the Army. But the warrant officers petitioned for a far larger, or, rather, a more complete reform. The Army men had a line of promotion by way of quartermasters and paymasters, rising step by step to the rank of lieutenant and captain, getting the pay and status of such rank. He believed there was no case in which a man had risen to be major, but there were cases in which a man retired with the rank and pension of a major in the Army. The warrant officers asked in their petition that a similar career should be opened to them in the Navy. What they wanted was a line of promotion—fleet gunners, boatswains, carpenters—analogous to the positions in the Army, by which the rank and status of lieutenant would be reached. That demand had been made in the House over and over again for six years, and repeatedly in the present Parliament, by himself and other Members. It had been pressed upon the First Lord and the Financial Secretary, who were not opposed to it—everyone was in favour of it; "our only Admiral" opposite (Admiral Field) was in favour of it, and he believed the bulk of naval officers, even those of the Admiralty, were in favour of it. What, then, was the reason it was not conceded?

*ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): The Treasury.

*MR. E. J. C. MORTON: Exactly, and so he would make an appeal to the Treasury, and by that show that they were following a "penny wise and pound foolish" policy, and that by concession they would establish a saving. The senior Member for Devonport had estimated the cost at £3,000 a year, but some officials had asserted that this estimate was too low. He was prepared to take it at £6,000, and then what did it amount to? For this £6,000 many men would be induced to go on for their second term of service. The number of men leaving at the end of ten years was about 1,050 a year. If 40 more men could be induced to re-engage for a second ten years the whole value of the £6,000 would be realised in one year. If a line of promotion were offered they might reasonably expect that 40 out of the 1,050 men would be willing to re-engage, and that would be a wise, economical step. He hoped the Civil Lord of the Admiralty would see whether he could not concede this reform, which, he believed, would result in a saving of money to the country as well as doing justice to the men.

*ADMIRAL FIELD said, he believed the Board of Admiralty were in favour of carrying out the promises which his hon. and learned Friend had alluded to, but he presumed that the Treasury stood in the way, as it had done before. It was very unpleasant that time after time they should have to bring these small Naval matters forward on the floor of the House. He asked that a Departmental Committee might be appointed to investigate the various grievances that had been referred to. They might not be of great value, but they were thought a good deal of in the Service at large; they had a far-reaching effect, and possibly had a great deal to do in checking the re-engagement of men at the end of their first 10 or 12 years. The only chance of drawing attention to these matters was when the Estimates came round. Naval men would be much pleased with the statement the Civil Lord of the Admiralty had placed before the Committee, and entertain respect for his abilities. He had had a difficult duty to discharge, but Naval men would admire the way he had discharged that duty at short notice. No doubt he would take note of the points that had been raised. But that had been done on former occasions; the notes had been taken to the Admiralty, but had borne no fruit. He was glad to see civilian Members representing dockyard constituencies, because they had to bend their minds to the requirements of the Navy in the dockyard ports. It was urged that warrant rank should be conceded to engine-room artificers. He had always said he could see no objection to warrant rank being granted to those in charge of engines in gunboats and torpedo-catchers. Naval men would not object to warrant rank being conceded to them. But he ventured to urge that if warrant rank was conceded to engine-room artificers the chief stokers should not be forgotten. The duties of engine-room artificers were important from their point of view, but those of the chief stokers were equally important, and if warrant rank were conceded to one class a claim would have to be put in for the older class. An hon. Member laid stress on the position of engineers. He was not aware of any grievance on their part. He had not heard that warrant officers were dissatisfied, but they had a grievance in the fact that hopes had been held out to them of the attainment of commissioned rank, and that the concession had never been made. He hoped the Civil Lord would make a note of the point, with a view to seeing that the grounds of that grievance were removed. The Naval Lords, he believed, were in favour of a proposal of that kind, but no doubt the Treasury blocked the way. The hon. Member for Devonport had referred to the loss, after 10 or 12 years service, of 33 per cent. of men, but that percentage could hardly apply to seamen only, and must include all classes.

*MR. E. J. C. MORTON said, the Return from which he quoted specified that the 33 per cent. applied to seamen only.

*ADMIRAL FIELD was glad that some one had been able to obtain a Return on this matter. He had tried to get one for years, but had not succeeded. The high percentage, however, must be accounted for by the fact that attractions on shore were held out to the men, and no doubt a number of them had the desire to run loose after 12 years' service. Of course the fire brigades in London and elsewhere snapped up many of them. But what would prevent such a large number being lost to the Service would be the granting of re-engagement money to the Coastguardsmen, as was done in the case of men serving afloat who received an extra twopence per day; but the Treasury, he supposed, blocked the way against any such arrangement as that. He had called attention to the matter over and over again, and the late Admiral Tryon had also said that the grievances in this direction were substantial. He did not think that the manning of the Fleet was altogether satisfactory, and it must be remembered that the number 88,800 included something like 4,000 boys in training, who could not be counted as seamen. The number, therefore, must be discounted, because a great many lads were included in it who could not take their places as fighting men in the Service. It was a matter of regret that the Royal Marine Force was not to be increased. That was one of the cheapest forces of the country, and gave a much larger return for expenditure than any other. An excellent Marine could be turned out in the course of twelve months, while it took five years to turn out a full-blown seaman; and seeing that the Marines were a most valuable corps, and a great stand-by in case of war, the decision not to increase it would lead to general regret. He wished to draw the attention of the Civil Lord to a grievance which he had pointed out on previous occasions, namely, that Majors of Marines suffered under grave disabilities as compared with officers of the same rank in other branches of the Army, by reason of their having to wait two years before they obtained their extra pay. The disability was offensive to the corps, and he hoped the hon. Gentleman would now see his way to remove it. We could get in abundance men who were untrained, without bounty as a rule, but certainly with bounty; but officers could be got only by hard training and careful nursing. He was much concerned to find no mention made of the increase of lieutenants. It was said that the increase in all ranks must be proportionate. He approved of bringing in officers of the Naval Reserve for whom he had every respect; but it would not be fair to put them on the lieutenants' list, give them seniority, and allow them to displace the men on that list. If they were incorporated with the service—and they ought to be—they should be kept on a separate list, and not incorporated with the lieutenants, because that would alter the flow of promotion and interfere with the just rights of officers trained in the service from boyhood. He observed with regret that the repairs to the *Sultan* and the *Monarch* were not yet completed, although they were to be in 1895; but they had certainly been a very long time in hand. He was delighted to find that the Admiralty recognised the importance of quick-firing guns. But with respect to these what was our position on the Mediterranean? Take eight of our battleships and eight of our rivals, the French—long might we be friends together! We had ten to eight; but take eight ships of each nation; how stood the armaments? In heavy guns the French had 95 quick-firing guns to our 22, and in secondary armament they had 25 to our 38, making a total for the French of 120 quick-firing and ordinary guns, and for the English of 60 quick-firing and ordinary guns. Let four rounds a minute be fired from the quick-firing guns, and one round a minute from the others, and the French Navy would be able to fire 405 rounds in a minute to our 126. It was impossible for us to have victory under these conditions, and therefore it was time to bring public opinion to bear on the Admiralty. Some of them had been invited to write to the papers, but he thought it better that they should call attention to the facts on the floor of the House of Commons. The matter was very important, because the proportions were so unequal; and, even if the totals were halved for broadside firing, 202 against 63 would simply reduce conflict to a shambles on one side. Our ships ought to be relieved in detail, one at a time, and their armaments changed. The Civil Lord laid stress on the Works Department. He might inform the Committee that at Devonport Dockyard there was only one dock that could take a first-class ironclad, and the situation was such that a vessel could go in and out only at certain conditions of the tide. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty seemed to make an apology for not including Dover Harbour Works in the first Loan Bill. The same Government were in power when this matter was mooted in 1886, when like proposals were submitted, but the Government withdrew them because of an insignificant opposition. We had gone on for nine years without this necessary accommodation at Dover, and we were to wait another year before the Government faced the situation. Well, they would not be here next year, and he supposed they would hand this matter over to their successors, with other items in this wonderful programme. There was a little harbour on the south coast admirably adapted for a torpedo station, namely, Newhaven Harbour, and he should be glad to hear that the Admiralty had its capabilities in this regard under consideration. The late Government established a Gunnery School at Sheerness, but hitherto the necessary appliances had been withheld. He hoped an assurance would be given that the money would be spent, and not handed back to the Treasury. The range which was needed was a purely Naval range, and it should not be held in joint ownership as a Military and Naval range. He should like to see adequate measures taken to secure that the Naval Reserve should be a proper Reserve, and not incorporated in the active service of the Fleet, for, then, it ceased to be a Reserve altogether. He alluded last year to a magnificent source to draw upon for the Naval Reserve, and that was the Scotch fishermen, but nothing had been done to enrol these men. A distinguished Admiral—now on the retired list, who, as captain commanded a ship in the Russian War, sent a lieutenant to Scotland, who enrolled 200 Scotch fishermen, and they were brought south to join the ship. The Admiralty, however, ordered the men to be drafted elsewhere, but in the end his gallant friend succeeded in having his own way. He was glad to see that a new training ship was to be established at Queenstown, and to learn that the *Northampton* was finding no difficulty in recruiting men in Ireland; but he wished to know what the complement of the *Northampton* was, and how many of these so-called adults over 18 years of age she was supposed to train. It was a good thing that dockyard and marine schools were to be placed under the inspection of the Education Department, and he trusted that the Commandants over these schools would no longer be allowed to turn boys out, and to send them to parish schools, merely because parents failed in their duty, and took no trouble to make their children attend the classes regularly.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON thanked the Committee for the valuable Debate which had taken place. He had no wish to curtail discussion, but he desired to appeal to the Committee to allow the Vote under consideration, Vote 1, and the Supplementary Vote, to be taken now. If those Votes were agreed to that night there would of course be further opportunities of discussion at the Report stage. If his request were acceded to the Government would be able to introduce the Loan Bill—which was the most important part of the programme—two days earlier than they otherwise could. If the Votes which he had mentioned were postponed until Thursday it would be all the longer before they could approach what, after all, was the real kernel of the question.

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON said, that he had no objection to the Vote for the men being taken now, because he thought that the statement of the hon. Member respecting that Vote had given general satisfaction. But upon the Vote for the money a number of hon. Members wished to speak, and it would, therefore, not be unreasonable that it should be put off to another day. Then the Supplementary Vote raised important questions of policy, including one affecting the Estimates of future years, namely, the amount that India should contribute for the services of the Navy in Indian waters. He suggested that there should be a compromise, and that the Committee should agree to the Vote for the men, but adjourn the Vote for the wages to a future day.

Vote agreed to.

Progress reported, and the House resumed.

Admiral Field.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES (CUSTOMS DUTIES) BILL.

On the Motion for Third Reading,

The UNDER SECRETARY for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said, some Amendments had been put down by the hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool, but, having looked into them, he was convinced they were not necessary, and he hoped the hon. Member would not press them.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) assented.

Bill read 3°.

MOTIONS.

TRAMWAYS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir J. T. Hibbert, Bill to amend the Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 26th March, and to be printed. [Bill 166.]

LAND VALUES (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES (NO. 2) BILL.

On motion of Mr. Naoroji, Bill to provide for the Taxation of Land Values by Local Authorities,

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 3rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 167.]

MARKET GARDENERS' COMPENSATION (No. 2) BILL.

Order for Committee read, and discharged; Bill committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, &c., to which the Market Gardeners' Compensation (No. 1) Bill is Committed.

House adjourned at Five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 13th March 1895.

The House met at Ten minutes after Twelve of the clock.

NEW WRIT.

For the Borough of Bristol (East Division), *v.* Sir Joseph Dodge Weston, Knight, deceased.—*(Mr. Thomas Ellis.)*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

BOARDS OF GUARDIANS (IRELAND) BILL.

MR. D. CRILLY (Mayo, N.) rose to move the Second Reading of the Boards of Guardians (Ireland) (Constitution and Powers) Bill. He was not, he said, inviting the House to sanction any novel or sensational programme or policy. The question of the reform and enlargement of the constitution and powers of Boards of Guardians in Ireland, with the cognate question of the construction of labourers' dwellings, was one which for years had been submitted to the judgment of the House whenever the chances of the ballot, or the opportunities of the Session, permitted the Irish Members to state their case. He thought he could confidently ask both sides of the House to lend their cooperation in carrying the Second Reading of the Bill. Of course he need not say that he exempted the representatives of Ulster landlordism. It was, however, with that exception the vaunt of the Conservative Party, that, while they repudiated, and were prepared to offer the most strenuous opposition to, any settlement of the Irish difficulty on the lines of the Home Rule Bill, which they described as a treasonable measure, they were willing to welcome and to give to the Irish people a reasonable scheme of reform. He trusted that he would show that the measure which he now submitted on behalf of the Irish Party was such a reasonable scheme of reform, and in that event, in view of their past declarations, he could call upon the Conservative Party for their support. On the other hand he thought he was entitled to look to the Government and its supporters for their hearty assistance. They had already, in the Local Government Act of last year, recognised the equity and the wisdom of most of the leading principles embodied in the present Bill. Surely it was not in the creed of Liberalism to-day that what was given by the Liberal Party in 1894 to the democracy of England and Wales, was to be withheld in 1895 from the democracy of Ireland. And as to the proposals which he submitted with the view of enabling Boards of Guardians in Ireland, in conjunction with other administrative authorities, to improve and ameliorate the condition of the Irish labourer and bring home to him a higher standard of comfort, he again looked to the Chief Secretary for his valuable aid; because, it was only the other day that the right hon. Gentleman admitted that he and his colleagues in the Government believed that the Labourers Acts in Ireland as they stood at present were imperfect and unsatisfactory, and that the Government intended to deal with the question. He, therefore, hoped that to-day he would find the right hon. Gentleman in a position to accompany him along the lines laid down in the Bill, as calculated and likely to make the lot of the Irish labourer a happier and a healthier one. This was a Bill of much moment to Ireland. The Irish National Party held that its effective application to their country would produce wholesome and very far-reaching beneficial effects. The Bill divided itself into four parts. The first part showed how they would definitely frame the constitution of Boards of Guardians in Ireland; the second part indicated the manner in which they would conduct the poor law elections; the third part provided for the presentation and hearing of poor law election petitions and the fourth part showed how in association with the poor law administration they would simplify and expedite the working of the Labourers Acts. Roughly taken, however, the Bill divided itself into two parts; the first dealing with the organisation and status of Poor Law Boards, and the second declaring how Poor Law Boards could help in administering the Labourers Acts and in quickening them into life. Let them reason by analogy, and see whether they could read what was going to take place to-day in what had taken place in the past. On the 21st of March 1893, the present Secretary of State for India, who was then President of the Local Government Board, introduced the Local Government Bill for England and Wales. In giving an indication of what the Bill proposed to do, the right hon. Gentleman used these words:—

> "We propose to abolish, firstly, all *ex-officio* or non-elective Guardians. We propose to abolish all qualifications for Guardians, and we propose that the electors of the Guardians shall be the same constituency as that I have mentioned for the Parish Council, namely, the County electors and the Parliamentary electors. We propose that there shall be no plural voting, no proxy voting and no voting papers, but voting by ballot and one man one vote. The body so elected will hold office for three years, one third of the members retiring every year, thus securing continuity of administration, and at the same time bringing to bear on the body at short intervals the judgment of public opinion."

How were that speech and those proposals received by the Gentlemen who were likely to oppose the present Bill? The Bill to which he referred contained drastic proposals; it revolutionised to a large extent the social, and to some extent the political, life of England and Wales. Yet it was hailed from the Front Opposition Benches, and from the Benches behind, absolutely with anthems of triumph. Everybody brought myrrh and frankincense to the right hon. Gentleman. His was a superb statement! What lucidity of explanation! What kindliness of tone! What did the Leader of the Opposition say in regard to the English Local Government Bill? The right hon. Gentleman said:—

> "That it is desirable in any case to extend the system of local self-government in large areas by county councils, and in small areas by parochial councils and otherwise, we are all agreed."

The right hon. Gentleman stated that they wereall agreed that the proposals contained in the Bill of the Secretary for India (Mr. H. H. Fowler), should be accepted by the House. The hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight (Sir R. Webster), also said that as far as he could—that was individually—without departing from his own views, it would be a pleasure to him to facilitate the progress of the Local Government Bill. Where did the pleasure come in? The hon. and learned Gentleman was referring to a Bill that proposed to abolish all *ex-officio* and non-elective guardians and all qualifications for membership; that simply established one man one vote in these elections; that compelled the Constitution to recognize that in future there should be no voting by proxy and no plural voting, and that provided that the voting should be taken by ballot. All the leaders of the Opposition were present then. Their absence to-day showed how much interest they took in Ireland. What would they do to-day if they were present? The great bulk of the Conservative Party simply accepted that Bill, and took no Division upon it. The hon. and learned member for Mid Armagh (Mr. Dunbar Barton) moved no Amendment to the Second Reading of the Bill. Was he going to pursue the same course to-day? On the former occasion, one of the leaders and one of the taskmasters of the hon. and learned Member, had said that the Bill should be accepted, and the hon. and learned Member and the other Ulster representatives of landlordism came to heel very quickly. It would indeed be a wonderful, unique, and curious Parliamentary phenomenon if, when a measure on the same lines was proposed in regard to Ireland as had been accepted for England and Wales, they did not find the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh or one of his friends coming down to the House to oppose it. The reason for this was known in Ireland. In the history of Moslem conquest, the most bitter opponents that their kith and kin then had were those sprung from the loins of Christian people. He would only say that, despite the opposition which would doubtless be shown from some of the Ulster Members, he trusted that the Bill would be carried. But apart altogether from the appeal which he would have made to English and Scotch Conservatives, he recognised their consistency in not being present to oppose the Bill. He wished them, in their absence, joy of their allies. He could appeal with confidence to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House to act towards Ireland in 1895 as they acted towards England and Wales in 1894. The lines of last year's Act had been followed in the present Bill. [The hon. MEMBER then proceeded to read Clauses 1 to 6 of the Bill, and continued.] Clause 7 simply provided, as in the English Act, that a third of the Guardians should go out each year, and be returned in the same way as they are in England and Wales and in Scotland. It was not necessary for him to refer to Parts 2 and 3 of the present Bill, because they were purely technical and consequential parts of the Bill, and provided for the holding of poor law elections, and for the hearing of election petitions. He would pass now to Part 4, which was one of the most important parts of the Bill, dealing with the Amendment of the existing Labourers Acts in Ireland. He had heard it urged, in opposition to this portion of the Bill, that it was a matter which should have been dealt with in a separate Bill. He said, and those associated with him said, that they were amply justified in grafting on this Bill a clause to amend the Labourers' Acts for two reasons—first, because there was a close association between the Irish Parliamentary Party and the labourers' cause. They had always championed the labourers' cause in season and out of season. On these benches and on platforms they had declared that the lot of the Irish labourer should be improved. They were, therefore, only too glad to take the earliest opportunity of trying to do something to simplify the Labourers' Acts, and make the position of the labourers clearer, higher, and better than it was at the present moment. That was the first reason why, as he urged, this clause should be grafted on to this Bill. They were justified in this by the second reason—and that was the intimate relationship existing between the various unions in Ireland and the Labourers' Acts as they were at present. It was a well-known fact in the social life of Ireland, that the unions were simply the go-between as regarded the labourers and the Government authorities. During all the years which had intervened since the Act was passed, 101 unions had petitioned the Local Government Board to confirm 28,304 cases. He was very glad indeed to hear that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, whose sincerity in these cases they all recognised, had put his hand to this plough, that he recognised the claims of the labourers and was going to deal with them. It was very hard to get a private Bill through the meshes of that House, and he trusted, if he failed, the Chief Secretary would succeed in his laudable endeavours to improve the position of the Irish labourers. The applications through the 101 unions had to pass through the hands of the Local Government Board, and he was sorry to say those of the Privy Council. All he could say was that if the right hon. Gentleman brought in a Measure dealing with this question, the Irish Party would grant the Bill, satisfactory as no doubt it would be, their faithful and undivided support. In urging his own Bill, being first in the field, they were anxious to deal with the question thoroughly. They held that there was no class which deserved more consideration and more kindly treatment than the Irish labourer. Everybody knew that the life of the Irish labourer was one incessant struggle against misery and hardship. He asked the House to imagine what the Irish labourer felt and what his wife and family must suffer, particularly in a period of distress like the present? He therefore appealed to the House in a spirit of humanity to give these men at all events the protection of the little house to which, under the existing law, they were perfectly and justly entitled. Undoubtedly there was urgent necessity for doing something to simplify the existing process. What is the result of the existing difficulties? Only 12,937 applications had been passed, or considerably less than 50 per cent. of the total, which was 28,304. Out of the 12,937 cases, in only 10,352 had cottages been provided. Somebody must be at fault. It might be Parliament, or it might be the officials in Dublin Castle. Why should they not take cognisance of the fact? Why, seeing that they were supreme, should they not disentangle the difficulty and make the path of the labourer easier? Why not take the task in hand? It is worth undertaking. Had there been any loss to the State? Had there been a loss on the houses which had been built? Out of the 10,352 cottages authorised, 10,272 were already occupied. How had the unions been repaid? How had these poor fellows met their liabilities to the State through the intermediary, the union, for the last 15 years, through strife and stress and poverty? Why, at the present moment, although it was a floating population, they found that out of the money advanced there was only something like £6,000 of arrears due at that moment. He reasoned, from the figures and the statements he had mentioned, that it was worth while to deal with this question. It was, indeed, the duty of Irishmen to deal with it because they knew their countrymen; and he was sure that the labourers of Ireland would recognise that they would never lack champions for their cause among the Members from Ireland. Parliament by its repeated efforts had recognised the necessity of passing Acts dealing with the labourers of Ireland; but, unfortunately, the House of Commons dealt with the question in a pettifogging spirit, and by tinkering methods, and thus there was always arising this chronic sore, to which it was called upon year after year to apply remedies. If, on the other hand, the House of Commons had dealt with the question in a broad, statesmanlike way, this social difficulty would have disappeared for ever. The blot of the Labourers Acts in Ireland at present was the interference of the Privy Council. It would simplify matters to get rid of the Privy Council altogether. This was the department of circumlocution, of routine, of waste of time, and of the loss of money; and, while applications from Boards of Guardians were being laboriously considered by the Privy Council, the unfortunate labourers might either die or go to the workhouse. He maintained that once they had entrusted the Local Government Board with power to deal with these applications from Boards of Guardians, the final settlement of them should rest with the Local Government Board. Had not the Privy Council enough to do in Ireland in attending to great Imperial questions without having placed before it a miserable little case as to whether a labourer's cottage in Skibbereen or Rostrevor should be built or not? The 34th Clause, dealing with an Order of the Local Government Board, was intended to get rid of the Privy Council in matters which lay between the unions and the Local Government Board. It was also sought to take advantage of the 2nd Schedule of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, empowering the Land Commission to advance money to local authorities. The first part of the Bill, dealing with the constitution and powers of the Boards of Guardians, practically embodied the provisions of the Act of 1893–94 applying to England and Wales. That was a Bill which was not opposed on its Second Reading, and its introduction was received by the House in a kindly spirit. No Irish Member on that occasion opposed the Bill, though he was now surprised to find that some Irish Members were disposed to oppose similar provisions being granted as were in force in England and Wales simply because they would apply to Ireland. He was confident that the Conservative Party would support the first part of the Bill, and he thought the Irish Members could also depend upon receiving the support of the majority of Members on the Government side of the House. If the House accepted the Bill, and eventually passed it, hon. Members would simply be giving to Ireland an instalment of that justice which the English people had so long and so unwisely withheld from her. He concluded by moving the Second Reading of the Bill.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.), in seconding the Motion to read the Bill for a second time, said its objects were two—(1) to expedite the working and to cheapen the expenses connected with the Labourers Acts in Ireland; and (2) to reform to some extent the Local Authorities in Ireland. He thought that nothing in our time had done more to improve the general aspect of Ireland than the Labourers Acts, and he maintained that the House ought to do all that lay in its power to facilitate the working of the Acts. No matter how anxious the Boards of Guardians were to put the Acts into operation, it took two years before the Boards of Guardians could erect a cottage. This state of things was largely brought about by the appeal which had at present to be made to the Privy Council. Sometimes applicants had to wait for months before the Privy Council could hear the appeals made to them, and this was one of the great delays in the working of the Acts which this Bill was designed to reform. In 1883, when the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) introduced his Bill dealing with the condition of labourers in Ireland, those who framed it were at a loss as to which body should be saddled with the responsibility of working the Acts. There were no popular Boards in Ireland, and for a long time the framers of the Bill of 1883 did not know on whose shoulders the responsibility should be placed. Boards of Guardians in Ireland could not be said to be representative in any sense of the word. Half of them were nominated by the Government, and half were elected on a particularly fancy Franchise. Nowadays they heard a great deal about "one man one vote," but in Ireland, under the Poor Law administration, it was a question of one man possessing 10, 20, 30, or 36 votes in an electoral division. A landlord might hold property in four electoral divisions, bringing his voting strength up to 144 votes. It was ultimately decided, however, to throw the responsibility on the Boards of Guardians. The late Colonel King-Harman, when the Bill was introduced, said that if they gave the elected Boards of Guardians the power to work the Act it would remain a dead letter. There were some persons in Ireland who were always endeavouring to stir up ill-feeling between the labourers and the farmers of Ireland; but he maintained that statistics proved this fact, that if they looked to districts where the Nationalists and the elected Guardians ruled the Board an honest endeavour had been made to work the Acts, whereas, if they looked at districts where the so-called champions of the labourers existed, where the *ex-officio* Guardians still held power, they would find as a rule that the Labourers Acts had remained a dead letter. He remembered well that an Ulster Member, the late Sir Charles Lewis, often regretted that the Board of Guardians in his district did not do their duty to the labourers. It was only right that the Government should bear in mind that there were Unions in Ireland—particularly in the west—where the poverty of the ratepayers was so great that there would be much difficulty in throwing any further burden upon them in the working of the Poor Law. In round numbers the erection of a cottage and securing the plot cost £130, but no more than 1s. a week or £2 12s. a year could be obtained from the labourer. Interest had to be paid on the £130; and the result was, that a large portion of the cost fell on the ratepayers. Whether by offering money at a reduced rate, or by some other means, he thought something might be done to relieve the poor ratepayers of the West of Ireland of this difficulty. They would probably be told by hon. Members who represented the Conservative interest in Ulster that jobs had been perpetrated by the Boards of Guardians, that they had shown great incapacity, that they were not worthy of being intrusted with further powers, and that but for the *ex-officio* Guardians there would have been more jobs perpetrated and more incapacity displayed. But that was an exaggeration. In Leinster and Munster, at all events, the Boards receive very little assistance from the *ex-officio* members; but when this argument of jobbery was referred to, he was always reminded of the administration of *ex-officio* Guardians and grand juries in his own county, where by a very gross job they had unjustly saddled the ratepayers with a cost of many thousands of pounds a year in relation to a county railway. Allusion had been made to the way in which the Irish labourer paid his debts. Despite his poverty, and the small wage he could obtain, the Irish peasant paid his rent with remarkable punctuality, and he had borne his hard lot with great patience and self-respect. It had been stated that the solution of the difficulty with regard to the poverty of the Irish labourer was emigration. But he wished it to be emphatically known that the whole Nationalist Party would set their faces dead against any proposal for further emigration from the country. They believed that Ireland was capable of improvement, and under fair conditions could maintain her people; and the Irish Party would in future endeavour by all the means at their disposal to stop what had been justly termed the hæmorrhage of the nation's blood. The Bill proposed to abolish *ex-officio* Guardians, and he saw no reason why they should not be abolished in Ireland as in England. He might be told, in opposition to this proposal, that the landlords in Ireland paid half the rates; and, further, that they paid the entire poor rate in cases where the valuation was £4 and under. That might be so, but did anyone suppose that the landlord did not cover that cost in increased rent? For his own part, he regretted to say—and he spoke free from bias—that gentlemen of birth, education, and wealth in Ireland had not a stronger sense of their duties as landlords and citizens. With the leisure and advantages they possessed they did not take their proper stand among the people and work for their amelioration as they ought to do. It was no fault of the local authorities or of the people that those gentlemen did not occupy the positions which might be expected of them, for the Irish people, who were a Conservative people in the broadest sense of the word, would be only too ready to welcome and respect them in those positions of leading and responsibility which their opportunities enabled them to fill. He did not view the present system with satisfaction, he would be glad to see the gentry of the district taking their proper position and their share in local administration for the benefit of the people. His remark in no way applied to hon. Members who sat in the House whose representative position gave evidence of their constituency, he referred to Leinster and Munster, where landlords, instead of being at the head of the people and working for the people, had little or no interest in popular local affairs. He commended the Bill with confidence to the acceptation of the House. He did not know that they could be sanguine as to the Bill becoming law, because Bills dealing with lesser, though more needed, reforms had again and again been rejected by the House and elsewhere. He remembered the Motion for the Second Reading of a Bill merely to equalise the local franchise in Ireland with that prevailing in England, being made in 1874 by his dear departed friend Mr. Richard Power, who was well known in the House. Every year since had a similar Bill been introduced, and every year rejected. The Bill now offered might not be perfect, but it was a Bill for a good object, and if passed and worked honestly he believed it would do much to alleviate the condition of the poor in his country, to raise them and to enable them to be self-respecting though poor citizens, and with that object he seconded the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill.

Mr. DUNBAR BARTON (Armagh, Mid) said, he had two faults to find with the able speeches with which the Bill had been introduced. In the first place, he regretted the hon. Members had omitted some matters material to the House to know before forming its judgment upon the Bill, and he would endeavour to supply these omissions; and in the second place, he regretted that the Mover had indulged in some observations of bitterness toward those who differed from him politically, like himself and his friends. He assured the hon. Gentleman that there was no intention to reciprocate that feeling of bitterness, and he would not imitate the hon. Gentleman's tone in anything he had to say. He proposed to consider the Bill in its four parts, and would support his contention that in many respects it was a crude and mischievous measure; and he would rely on some observations of the Chief Secretary, made since he came into Office, which would go so far to show that even he would not be able to give unqualified support to all the provisions of the Bill. The Bill would tend to increase the already heavy rates all over Ireland, it would tend to remove certain very necessary safe-guards in the administration of local affairs in Ireland, and to the promotion of a great deal of unnecessary litigation. He would make this general observation in reply to what had been said about the English analogy that he was not so slavishly devoted to English analogy as hon. Members below the Gangway appeared to be on this occasion. But these hon. Members were never weary of proclaiming the incompetence of Englishmen to deal with Irish matters; never weary of denouncing English institutions; and yet, when it suited their purpose, they came forward with a servile copy of an English institution to an extent that he, steadfast Loyalist as he was, was not prepared to go. What were the facts, taking them on the hon. Members' own ground? In the course hon. Members were pursuing they were not following, they were inverting, the English precedent. In England the County Council Bill was first introduced, and then, in proper order, Bills dealing with District Councils and Boards of Guardians as subordinate to County Councils. But hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway had refused the County Government Bill for Ireland with contumely—[An hon. MEMBER: "We preferred Home Rule."] —and now they proposed a subordinate measure in improper order, putting the "cart before the horse," a form of progression he did not intend to associate himself with. Taking the first part of the Bill, the democratising of Boards of Guardians, as it had been called, three reforms were proposed—to abolish the qualification for Guardians now existing, to abolish plural voting, and to abolish *ex-officio* Guardians; and with no sufficient reasons had a case been established. The hon. Member who had just spoken had reminded the House in a casual way that the incidence of poor-rating in Ireland was wholly different from that in England. In Ireland the poor rate on small holdings, or on a quarter of the holdings all over Ireland, is paid entirely and absolutely by the landlords; and on all the other holdings, large or small, half the poor rate is paid by the landlords. With such a different state of affairs how was it possible to argue for the application of the same conditions as the Franchise and the constitution of the Boards as in England? To apply them would be an injustice, and any such application should be *mutatis mutandis.* But hon. Members said that landlords made provision for the poor rate on the rent they exacted, and on this point he referred the House to evidence given before the Commission which sat last Session. The evidence of two witnesses, Mr. W. F. Bailey and Mr. O'Keefe, afforded a complete answer to the hon. Member for East Waterford. Mr. Bailey said—

> "The rates and taxes have also to be considered in the outgoings. They have to be paid by the tenant and they are considered in the rent and credited to the tenant when fair rent is fixed."

And Mr. O'Keefe said—

> "We make an allowance of the cess and rates in favour of the tenant."

Therefore the answer was complete—that a tenant had the right to go into the Land Court, and the Court in fixing the rent, on the authority of the Commissioners legal and lay, it was stated, credited the tenant with the amount of the poor rate. His poor rate, then, was paid for him, and the landlord did not, and could not, charge it in the rent. How, with such a state of things existing —the landlords over three-quarters of Ireland paying the rate, in the remaining portion the whole—could the Bill be justified on the democratic principle and the English analogy? [Mr. BYLES here interposed a remark.] He would refer to that matter now: the hon. Member for Bradford had on a previous occasion intervened, and he then received his answer from the Chief Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman had several times been asked if he intended to introduce a Bill to assimilate the Poor Law Franchise in Ireland to that in England. On February 17th 1893 the question being put to him, the right hon. Gentleman said very properly—

> "It must be borne in mind that the incidence of Poor Law Rating is different in England."

The Chief Secretary would bear that in mind when he addressed the House upon that Bill. Then the hon. Member for Bradford rose and asked why there should be that different treatment in England and Ireland, and the Chief Secretary replied that there was also differential treatment in the matter of rates. Such was the answer the hon. Member received from the responsible Minister in the House.

*MR. W. P. BYLES, (York W.R., Shipley) said, the hon. and learned Gentleman had not appreciated the point of his remark, to the effect that the landlords would be equally eligible for election with the tenants, whether the rates were paid by landlord or tenant.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON reminded the hon. Member that the argument was founded on the English analogy, and it was not until 1894 that *ex-officio* guardians were then abolished. When County Councils were established in Ireland, of course the argument would have due weight. The same point was involved in the question the hon. Member put to the Chief Secretary, whose answer he adopted; there was a different treatment in the matter of rates, and that accounts for the difference in the construction of the boards. Then, on

January 11th last year, the hon. Member for Kerry put a question, and the Chief Secretary replied that in Ireland occupiers paid half the rates, and in England they were supposed to pay the whole; and when in a supplementary question the hon. Member (Mr. Sexton) reminded the right hon. Gentleman of the *ex-officio* element and plural voting, the Chief Secretary said he did not conceive that that made enough difference. On the replies and arguments of the Chief Secretary since he came into Office, and in full view of the facts and the responsibilities of his position, he relied, and he had told the House that the reason for the difference in franchise and in the constitution of Boards of Guardians in the two countries was the difference in the incidence of rates, and even the fact that there were also *ex-officio* members was not enough to justify him in admitting there was anything wrong in that state of affairs. That was practically the reply of the Chief Secretary to his own supporters. These hon. Members had said this was a landlords' question, but in that he did not agree. He spoke for his own constituents, and believed he expressed the views of small farmers so far as he could ascertain them, that they had no desire to see a proposal like this carried out. Their opinion on the economy of the rates was that the best way was to have the ratepayers fairly represented, and that those who paid no rates should not have the management of affairs. He believed he represented the opinions of farmers small and great when he said they did not wish to see a change in the constitution of Boards of Guardians, which would tend to give the power of imposing rates to those who paid a very small portion or no rates at all. Would the Chief Secretary say, if, on the whole, the administration of the poor law had been so economical as to justify this extension? He had found it necessary during his administration to suspend one Board of Guardians. Was it expected that the House would consent, with a light heart, to an extension of the powers of guardians, in the direction of placing the whole power and rating and taxation in the hands of those who practically paid no rates at all? With regard to the English analogy, the difference in the constitution of the buildings only corresponded to, and was correlative with, the difference of rating in the two countries. He was not enthusiastic about all the cant they heard of equality of institutions between this country and Ireland. The land laws of Ireland differed essentially from those of England, and if hon. Members below the gangway would not consent to the assimilation of those laws, it was inconsistent on their part to expect assimilation of the laws in other directions. He was not at all satisfied that the proposals contained in this Bill were just, expedient, or opportune. Although the Bill proposed to deal with the Poor Law, yet it failed to touch any of the real grievances which were complained of by the Irish people. A matter of vital importance, like that of the deportation of paupers to Ireland, which the Chief Secretary had admitted the propriety of dealing with, was ignored, and nothing whatever was said about the question of the superannuation of the poor law officers without unduly burdening the rates; in fact, the Bill, while not touching any of the grievances, simply intended to swamp all the existing safeguards against mismanagement. By the second part of the Bill, which was hardly noticed by hon. Members below the Gangway, it was proposed to introduce into every electoral division in Ireland the whole system of Parliamentary Elections by ballot with all its inconveniences. There were 142 electoral divisions in Antrim, 42 in the county which he represented, 45 in Carlow, 89 in Cavan, and 134 in Clare; and in one-third of those places there would be elections by ballot every year, accompanied by all the expense, excitement, and inconvenience which usually attended a Parliamentary Election.

*Mr. JOHN HAMMOND (Carlow) said, the hon. and learned Member was mistaken. The number of electoral divisions in Carlow was 35, not 45.

Mr. BARTON said he had taken the figures from Thom's Directory, but would accept those which the hon. Member had given. In County Carlow then, there would, in all probability, be some 35 contested elections.

*Mr. HAMMOND said, that at the utmost there would be only twelve.

Mr. BARTON thought the elections in County Clare would require a large number of extra police being sent there. The cost of the register in the electoral divisions—and every member of the public was to be able to obtain a copy of it—would be thrown on the rates, and he thought this part of the Bill would be far from popular in Ireland. Under Part 3 of the Bill he, as a lawyer, could see, looming in the distance, any number of election petitions which would be tried by the County Court Judges, and this flood of litigation, involving expenses to parties and to rates, would give satisfaction to no one in Ireland beyond the county solicitors, to whom it would be a mine of wealth. With regard to the fourth part of the Bill, he would not yield to any man in his desire to ameliorate the condition of the labourers, but he must point out that the Labourers Acts were far superior to the English Acts in the advantages and benefits which they conferred upon the class they were intended to serve. The sneer of the right hon. Member who spoke last at the landlords was undeserved, because, if it were not for the landlords, thousands of labourers would be thrown out of employment and reduced to misery and starvation. The hon. Member for West Limerick, who was entitled to speak on behalf of the labourers, was a member of the Labour Commission which inquired into their condition, and made several recommendations in their favour. That Commission, for example, strongly recommended that loans should be made to farmers instead of to the Guardians; that Labourers' Committees should be established, and many other practical suggestions were made. But not one of them appeared in this Bill. There was a proposal to abolish the right of appeal to the Privy Council. It was an exaggeration to say that that right of appeal was a clog in the wheels of the Labourers' Acts. On the contrary, it was a protection against the cases of tyranny and persecution which had, over and over again, been proved before the Privy Council. Down to the year 1889, only 220 appeals were made to the Privy Council, while thousands of cottages had been sanctioned, so that there could not be so very much clogging of the system after all;—196 of those 220 appeals were rejected by the Privy Council. In one case it was proposed to reinstate an evicted tenant on a farm from which he had been evicted. Was that a legitimate use of the Acts? Then there was another case in which it was proposed to put a cottage on the lawn of a landlord, just opposite his hall door, which could only have been proposed to insult him. But it was not only the landlord class which made use of this right of appeal, for the Parish Priest of Tullamore had appealed against an attempt to erect a cottage on a particular part of the land around his parish house, which was to be done for the purpose of annoyance. Farmers, too, had appealed. One because the most convenient means of access to his farm would be blocked, and another because the passage of his cattle to his farm would be destroyed. It was needless to say that in all those cases the Privy Council did justice to the aggrieved parties. But the worst abuse of all, perhaps, was the attempt, in certain parts of Ireland, to erect cottages for old men upwards of 70 years of age, which would practically be making the Acts a substitute for old age pensions.

Mr. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.) said, that perhaps there were children who could pay.

Mr. BARTON, resuming, said, the hon. Member would not suggest that the policy of the Act was a policy of charity. It was distinctly intended for the working labourers, and not for old men past their work, however deserving, as a shelter for them and their children. He wished to mention two or three illustrations of the kind of cases which were brought before the Privy Council. Captain Crosbie, a well-known landlord in King's County, built 70 cottages. When 11 were vacant it was proposed to build others. Then on a farm of 40 acres belonging to Miss Bolton, in Nenagh Union, Tipperary (a relative, he supposed, of Mr. Bolton, who became so unpopular, owing to prosecutions in Ireland), where there were already two cottages, it was proposed to put five more. He admitted that such cases did not frequently occur, and that out of the thousands of cases there were probably only 200 like them; but these cases might occur at any time, and when it did occur it was essential there should be an independent tribunal to which there should be an appeal. He thought the Chief Secretary admitted that it was not expedient or safe to dispense with an appeal in certain cases. But that there was an appeal to the Local Government Board would be the right hon. Gentleman's answer. The Local Government Board had reviewed thousands of cases, but it was necessary to have a further appeal, because he found from a return which was before Parliament, that the cases he referred to were not the only cases of the kind. In an appeal from the Tullamore Union it was shown that parties desirous of opposing the Guardians before the Local Government Board inquiry were intimidated from attending.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): When was that?

MR. BARTON: It was before 1889. The names were John and Jeremiah Hand, and the cases would be found in the return. Was it not plain that if such malice and annoyance had taken place in certain places it might go farther and others might be intimidated? It was necessary that there should be in Dublin a high and independent tribunal where Guardians could be represented by counsel which would do justice whether landlords or humbler farmers were concerned. In his humble opinion, the Bill was crude and mischievous. It tried to democratise the Poor Law Boards in a manner which was unjust and contrary to the facts of Irish life, and inconsistent with the Irish Poor Law. In establishing these elections and election petitions it was simply bringing disorder and confusion into country life in Ireland, and promoting the possibility of endless litigation. It did nothing to help the Labourers; it followed none of the recommendations of the Labour Commission, and simply tried, in a political sense, in exceptional cases, to expose to annoyance and persecution those who unquestionably had been proved to be in danger of annoyance and persecution. For his own part he did not despair of the future in reference to these matters. He believed that what would improve local administration in Ireland ultimately, and render the mass of the people fit to be intrusted with the administration of local affairs, would be the expansion of the purchase system, which would make the small tenants owners of their own lands, liable for their own rates, by spreading a spirit of self-reliance and giving them the motive of self-interest, which would be a real safeguard. When they had this, the Government would be able to dispense with the safeguards which at present existed, but which he ventured to think were absolutely necessary in the present condition of affairs.

MR. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, N.) said that, in supporting the Second Reading of the Bills, his duty was to apply himself to that portion of it which dealt with the Labourers Acts, and he should recall some of the incidents that had come under consideration while he sat on the Labour Commission for more than three years. There were sub-commissioners who were appointed to inquire into the working of the Labourers Acts and the social condition of labourers generally. As a member of the Commission who did not subscribe to the majority report, he must bear his testimony to the efficient manner in which the sub-commissioners did their work, and the impartial character of the reports they laid before the Commission. One of the sub-commissioners was a Mr. O'Brien, who had had a long and intimate connection with the Poor Law Board in Ireland. As far back as 1869 he drew up a report on the condition of agricultural labourers.

Attention being called to the fact that 40 Members were not present, the House was counted, and, there being 40 Members present,

In his final Report of 1893, Mr. O'Brien said—

> "It will probably, I think, be accepted as a fairly well established position that in few, if any, of the countries, with the affairs of which we are conversant, has the condition of the class of agricultural labourers, in regard to house accommodation, ever been known to sink to a lower level of general wretchedness than that very largely reached in Ireland in this respect in even comparatively modern times."

In a subsequent paragraph he noticed a counterpoise to this in the remedial Legislation of the past ten years; but he added that, in spite of the Acts that had been passed, there was still an immense amount of work to be done. Mr. Macrae was one of the sub-commissioners appointed to travel through the north of Ireland.

> "He directed attention to the little use made of the powers conferred upon rural sanitary

authorities, and he said this inaction was not attributable to the satisfactory condition of the cottages, for he described them as bad. In Ballymahon, 'the accommodation of the majority is still poor, and that of many simply vile.' There was 'a cabin, 11 feet by 9 feet, with no chimney, window, or furniture, occupied by a man and his wife, who had taken in as lodgers a women and her five children.' At Ballymahon there was 'a cabin of one apartment, 15 feet by 12 feet, into which was crowded a man and his wife, six boys, and three girls, or eleven persons in all.'"

Up to July 1892 the Local Government Board had sanctioned schemes for building 11,774 cottages, and of this whole number nearly 99 per cent. were in the provinces of Leinster and Munster. That was highly creditable to the farmers in the south of Ireland. They had performed their duty conscientiously, and it would be well if the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh and his friends were to take a leaf out of their book. [MR. W. JOHNSTON: "God forbid!"] A representative from the North of Ireland said "God forbid!" but he trusted that that exclamation would not be endorsed by any hon. Member who took an interest in the welfare of the agricultural labourer. In the last few weeks there had been meetings in the north attended by the Protestant tenant farmers of Ulster, who had declared that it was high time that the condition of the labourer should be taken into consideration by that House. The Liberal Unionists from the north of Ireland had been warned that they would meet with difficulties unless they supported the Land Bill before the House for the improvement of the condition of the tenant farmers, and if they opposed the present Bill they must be prepared to face as well an agitation on the part of the labourers. One of the objections raised by the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh was, that the Bill would take away the present right of appeal to the Privy Council. But the series of records put in by the sub-commissioners pointed to this, that the Privy Council was the principal obstacle in the way of the practical working of the Labourers Acts in Ireland. By removing this barrier the Irish Party would do a good service to the labourers of Ireland. There was no doubt that the operation of the Acts had been retarded by the interposition of the Privy Council. It was owing to its possible interposition that a great many Boards of Guardians had refrained from taking the initiative, and they were now waiting in hopes that remedial Legislation would be carried through Parliament. Two years ago he had travelled through the south of Ireland with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University, and the right hon Gentleman said that he could not have believed that there existed in any part of the Empire such dwellings as he then visited, and that he would support any measures likely to remedy such a deplorable state of things. The House was now given an opportunity to remedy it. Let them give the local authorities power to extend their operations, and let them do away with the system of constant reference to the Local Government Board. When once a local authority had approved a scheme there ought to be much less delay in carrying it out than there was now. At present, in some cases, eight months elapsed before a Local Government Board Inspector was sent to the locality. Why should he not be sent within a month? The hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh had referred to the relations of the Irish Party with the labourers. He would tell the hon. and learned Member that the Irish Party had always advocated the claims of the Irish labourer, both in the House and out of it. It was they who first took action on the labourers' behalf, and little support did they get from hon. Members who came from the north of Ireland. There was this difference between the position of the agricultural labourer in the north and the position of the labourer in the south; to the labourer in Ulster no sympathy was extended by his Parliamentary representatives, whereas the labourers in the south, at any rate, had the Home Rule Party to voice his cause. As the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh had taken such deep interest in the working of the Labourers Acts, he would show the hon. Member that there was need for a change in the law. Mr. Richards, a Sub-commissioner, comparing agricultural labourers cottages in Ireland with those in England, said—

"Monmouth was by far the worst of the English Unions visited, and, in describing what I had seen th re, I felt it my duty to draw attention to the lamentable condition of the cottages, and the absolute joyless condition of the agricultural labourers. Were it possible to translate the Loughrea labourers into the Monmouth cottages, bad as they are, they ought to be happy. I have, of course, regarded these cottages from our English standpoint and made comparisons in my own mind with English models."

If there were faults in the parts of the Bill dealing with the constitution of Poor Law Boards, let them be remedied in Committee; but let them not refuse to extend to Ireland the principle that was embodied in the English Parish Councils Bill. He feared that no appeal from him would have any effect on hon. Members from the north of Ireland, who had always opposed schemes for the political and social elevation of the people of Ireland. He trusted, however, that the House would not reject a measure that was likely to improve the social condition of a class with whom they could not fail to sympathise deeply. As the right hon. Member for West Birmingham once said in his Radical days, there was no more pathetic picture in our whole social system than that presented by the agricultural labourer. If that remark was applicable to the agricultural labourer of England it could be applied with ten times more force to the condition of the agricultural labourer of Ireland. It was unnecessary for him to go into the causes that placed the agricultural labourer in the position he was in. The bad legislation of this country spoke the cause. For the past 25 years this House had been engaged in an endeavour to make the Irish tenant happy, but still his condition left much to be desired. The wages of an agricultural labourer in Ireland ranged from 7s. to 9s. a week, whereas in England they varied from 11s. and 12s. to 15s. The disparity of conditions pointed to a still greater issue, and that was the necessity of allowing the Irish people to govern themselves according their own ideas. Speaking especially as the representative of an agricultural constituency, knowing that the agricultural labourers were permeated with a desire to elevate their condition, and seeing that that desire could not be accomplished without the aid of this House, he would appeal to the House to give a second reading to the Bill, as a measure calculated to bring comfort and peace and a better prospect in the future to the agricultural labourers of Ireland.

MR. W. E. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) claimed that, in regard to Legislation affecting Irish agricultural labourers, no side of the House had a monopoly. He was the last person to withhold from Nationalist Members from Ireland the credit they certainly deserved for initiating measures which had been of great value to the agricultural labourers, but at the same time he claimed recognition from them of the fact that those initiatory measures had been supported by Members who represented Ireland in the Conservative interest, while subsequent Acts had been passed on the initiation of himself and other hon. Members who represented different political opinions in Ireland. The hon. Member had used language of a highly-contentious character, and absolutely unwarranted, and not at all tending to promote the interests he had at heart. Having carefully examined the present measure he was bound to say that a more crude and undigested set of provisions was never offered to the consideration of this assembly. It was said the provisions relating to poor-law guardians were moulded on the District Councils Acts in England and Scotland, but he contended there was no analogy whatever between the duties of the District Councils and those which devolved upon Boards of Guardians in Ireland. Having been a member of the party which set up Local Government in England and Scotland, he should have no Parliamentary position in opposing the establishment of similar Local Government for Ireland. He had always been an advocate of the extension to Ireland of the system of Local Government recently established in England and Scotland, and if this Bill were likely in any way to accomplish that object he should be prepared to follow the hon. Member into the Lobby. But the Bill would do nothing of the sort. It simply was an attempt to tinker with one portion of the Local Government of Ireland, and it would place a very important portion on a basis which would be very undesirable, one for which no precedent could be found, and which would not be advantageous to Ireland. For those reasons he could not support the Bill. If the Bill could be amended in Committee in any hopeful way he should be prepared to reconsider his decision, but having carefully looked through the clauses, he thought it absolutely hopeless to make this a measure adequate to the circumstances of the case, or one which could afterwards be worked into what he hoped to see established in Ireland—a system of Local Government founded, like that of England and Scotland, on popular representations. The hon. Member had alleged that in certain parts of Ireland the Labourers Acts had been practically a dead letter. The Mover of the Bill said that they were not necessary in Ulster, and to a certain extent he agreed with him. In some of the Ulster counties there was not the population which would be affected by these Acts, but, of course, there were other counties, especially in the north-east, where there was a large agricultural labouring population, and where the Acts might, or might not, be necessary. He thought, certainly, that the hon. Gentleman who seconded the Bill went beyond the facts when he stated that the cause of the Acts not being in operation was the action of the *ex-officio* Guardians or the land owning classes. No one who knew the Unions in the North of Ireland—no one who knew the composition of the Boards of Guardians—could doubt that these bodies were beyond the control of the landowning classes. He had a pretty large acquaintance with the counties in Ulster, and he could not put his hand on a single Union in which there was an operative majority of *ex-officio* Guardians who could carry the Board with them in all matters. The hon. Member who had denounced the action of the *ex-officio* Guardians would be surprised if he went down to one of these Boards of Guardians in Ulster on a day when there was a paid post to be filled up. He would find, generally, that the candidate of the elected Guardians would in all, or nearly all, cases be carried, against what was called the candidate of the *ex-officio* Guardians. It was perfectly absurd for anybody to argue that the fact that the Labourers Acts were not in operation in North-east Ireland was due to the action of the land-owning class. He might take one Union in his own Division. It was a notorious fact that the difficulty in that Union was owing to the opposition of the elected Guardians. But there were reasons apart altogether from the views of the elected Guardians for the Unions being reluctant to put the Acts into operation. The report of Mr. W. Little, the senior Assistant Agricultural Commissioner, pointed out good reasons for these Acts not being so largely availed of in Ulster as in the rest of Ireland. [The hon. Member then referred to page 28 of the Report in support of his argument.] The fact was, the proportion of fourth-class houses in Ulster was much smaller there than in the other three provinces. There were also other reasons which had operated, which were to be found stated in Mr. Macrea's report. One reason was, that the Boards of Guardians were reluctant to burden the ratepayers, in view of the prevailing agricultural depression. When the Mover of the Bill denounced that House and the authorities in Ireland who were connected with the Administration of these Acts for their delay and their circumlocution, he seemed not to have appreciated the bearing of the statistics which he had himself quoted. The hon. Member told the House that up to the 31st of March last year, there were 10,352 houses built, and of these there were 10,272 houses let. When they found that with an average rent of 9d. per week there were arrears to the extent of £6,548, they must not be surprised if some Unions viewed with alarm the extension to their Unions of a system which would entail a heavy burden.

Mr. AUSTIN: Improve the system of collection.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. Member has not placed in the provisions of of the Bill any proposal for improving the system of collection. The reasons of these arrears, so far as he knew, was this: in many cases the houses were derelict. They had been left by the labourers who had gone away, and when the houses were not let the loss fell upon the Union. Arrears also arose from the fact that the tenants of Boards of Guardians, like many other tenants, declined to pay on the ground that the rent was unreasonable. Hon. Members, therefore, must understand that the example which was set in Unions in the South of Ireland had a great effect on Unions in other parts of the country in intimidating them from applying the Acts. On the other hand, he admitted that some of the Boards of Guardians displayed an absolutely unaccountable and foolish reluctance to provide necessary accommodation for the labouring population. He believed that in Ballymena Union a great deal of natural excitement and irritation among the labourers had been caused by being deprived of the advantages of the Acts—excitement which would have been avoided if the Guardians had taken a sensible course, and at once entered upon the scheme. Apparently the information obtained by the Assistant Agricultural Commissioners in Ireland had had a strong effect upon Mr. William Little. In presenting his views to the Commission, and in dealing with the extension of the Irish Labourers' Acts to England, he gave as a reason for opposing the extension, that any general application of the principle of providing house accommodation by local popularly elected bodies would open the door to any amount of jobbery, favouritism and corruption, He added that it was only as a last resort that this plan should be adopted. These views of Mr. Little were not taken from any action of the Boards of Guardians in Ulster; and therefore they must be drawn from experience of the other three provinces. There was nothing in Mr. William O'Brien's report which could be brought with any success against the view expressed by Mr. Little, and that view would be sustained by anyone who had investigated the actions of some of the Boards in the south. What was the real reason that the policy of these Acts had not commended itself to the Boards in the north? Mr. MacRae stated that a highly representative authority had informed him that the farmers did not wish to create a new order of labourers who would have the control of the situation. That was the fact. He agreed with the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading, that something ought to be done to increase the effectiveness of the Irish Labourers' Acts, but he defied the hon. Member to point to any provision in the Bill having that result. It was alleged by an hon. Member, who quoted the authority of Mr. William O'Brien's report, that the Privy Council's jurisdiction caused a delay of two years. If Mr. O'Brien had been quoted in full, it would have been found that the action of the Privy Council had very little to do with the delay. It was owing, on the one hand, to the procrastination of the Boards of Guardians, and on the other to the procrastination of the Local Government Board. Mr. O'Brien, in his report, referred to the statements made by three Clerks of Unions, and nearly all the recommendations referred to the machinery of the Acts which operated long before the Privy Council came in. They stated that nine-tenths of the delay was due entirely to the prescribed forms of procedure. It was against the machinery of the Acts, as worked by the Boards of Guardians and the Local Government Board, that Mr. O'Brien brought the most serious charges. With 90 per cent. of the schemes under the Acts, the Privy Council had nothing to do. Their jurisdiction only operated where compulsory powers for the acquisition of land were taken, or where the ratepayers petitioned against the provisional order sanctioned by the Local Government Board. Did anyone propose to do away with any appeal from the Local Government Board? Mr. O'Brien himself did not propose to have the Local Government Board as the final authority. He suggested the County Court or the Court of Appeal to the Irish Land Commission for the position. Did any hon. Gentleman from Ireland really believe that if the appellate jurisdiction in these cases was given to the Land Commission, any step of procedure would be taken an hour earlier? The Appellate Court of the Land Commission had as much work to do as any court in Ireland; while, on the other hand, the Privy Council exercised their appellate jurisdiction in a manner injurious to the interests of the ratepayers or to the principle of the Labourers' Acts? In the year 1889—the last for which detailed returns were available—the Privy Council had 162 of these petitions against schemes before them. Of that number, 72 were presented by owners who were also occupiers of the land, and 78 were presented by occupying tenants. Therefore a majority of the whole number were presented, not by the land-owning class, but by the tenants. Nine joint petitions were presented by owners and occupiers, and three petitions were presented by cess payers. What was the result of these 162 petitions? Seventy-six of the schemes were abandoned by the Boards of Guardians. That alone was a very strong confirmation of the necessity for having an authority like the Privy Council to supervise these provisional schemes. Eight petitions were withdrawn, and the Provisional Orders confirmed; 12 schemes, though opposed, were confirmed by the Privy Council, and the remaining 66 schemes were amended. In 99 per cent. of the cases in which schemes were amended, it was only in regard to one or two out of the 30 or 40 colleges dealt with in the Order, that objection was taken, and in many instances other sites were substituted when the evidence justified taking that action. He therefore submitted that the action of the Privy Council in dealing with these schemes was absolutely justified by the merits of the cases and by the facts discovered in connection with them. He urged in these circumstances that the clause in the Bill abolishing the appellate jurisdiction of the Privy Council could not be supported by evidence. The hon. Member who preceded him forgot to inform the House that the assistant commissioners who had studied the question were themselves of the deliberate opinion that some appellate jurisdiction was required. Nothing would have a more injurious effect upon the extended operation of the Labourers Acts in Ulster, than the abolition of the appellate jurisdiction which now existed. The confidence of the ratepayers would be materially diminished, and the result would be to make Boards of Guardians, who were now reluctant to put the Acts in operation, still more reluctant to do anything to ameliorate the condition of the agricultural labourer. No Member had produced one tittle of evidence to show that the Privy Council had improperly exercised their jurisdiction or that their action had in any way put a clog upon the operation of the Acts. He should like to have some explanation of Clause 31, which substituted for the present system of arbitration that provided under the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890. He could not conceive what advantage would arise from the change. It seemed to him that neither the Mover nor the Seconder had taken the trouble to make themselves even superficially acquainted with the provisions of that Act. Then he could not understand for what reason it was proposed to re-enact in Clause 40 the provision of the Labourers Act of 1885, which was repealed in 1886, on the Motion of Lord FitzGerald, the representative of the Government. Clause 41, which practically repealed Section 14 of the Act of 1886, was most objectionable. Hon. Members from Ireland took great credit for introducing the 14th Section of the Act of 1886. It was the Section which existed in the Grand Jury Act, and which gave power to a contractor to enter and take materials, provided compensation was given to the owner and occupier. It also provided that a labourer's cottage should not be built in orchards or demesne lands or home farms, or other specified areas in Ireland to which, in 1886, the House deliberately decided the Acts should not apply. Hon. Gentlemen supporting the Bill would have the greatest possible difficulty in showing a single case in which the interests of the labourers had been damnified by this provision. In every case in which schemes were rejected on the ground that they came within the exceptions contained in the 14th Section of the Act of 1886, it was shown that there were other available sites. The proposal to repeal this Section would introduce considerable prejudice to that portion of the measure which dealt with the Irish Labourers Acts, and he thought hon. Gentlemen would be well advised in withdrawing it. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading said the Bill would confer immeasurable benefits on the labouring population of Ireland. If he believed that to be the case, his general position with regard to the Bill as a whole would be considerably altered. But he did not see any single provision in that part of the Bill which dealt with the amendment of the Labourers Acts which would hasten in any degree the operation of these Acts. He did not see any proposal which would give any impulsion to the policy of these Acts in those districts in the North of

Ireland, where he believed the labourers had just reason to complain of the present action of Boards of Guardians. The clauses of the Bill dealt with matters entirely outside the present obstacles to the operation of the Acts in the north-eastern counties. If he could see any possibility of improving the measure in that respect he would give it his cordial assent. But the only proposal of the Bill was to do away with very beneficial provisions in the existing law, and in his opinion, so far from benefiting the labouring population, that would very considerably prejudice their interests. Those parts of the Bill dealing with the reform of Boards of Guardians were, he believed, entirely defective in the machinery which they proposed; and though he was strongly in favour of the adoption in Ireland of the principle of local government which now existed in England and in Scotland, he did not see that that principle would be advanced by this Bill. There were, he believed, strong reasons for differentiating between Boards of Guardians as they existed in Ireland and the District Councils which the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading held out as their natural counterpart in England. The Boards of Guardians under the Bill would be entirely confined to the administration of the Poor Law, whereas in England the District Councils had a far larger and more extended operation. If it was possible by any method of amendment to create in Ireland under this Bill District Councils similar to those existing in England and Scotland, he would look upon the Bill in a totally different spirit. But as that was quite impossible, and. as he believed the Bill would prejudice their local government machinery in Ireland, which he desired to see altered, he was forced to withhold his assent to those portions of the measure dealing with the reform of the Boards of Guardians.

Mr. P. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.) remarked that the last speaker had said that he was not opposed to the establishment of County Boards in Ireland. He hoped the time was not far distant when they would have such Boards in Ireland. The hon. Member had also said that the Irish Members were fishing for the votes of the agricultural labourers. He thought, however, that the Conservatives were also fishing for those votes, and they had spread their nets very wide for that purpose. He had been for some years a Poor Law Guardian and Chairman of the Wexford Board of Guardians. As such, he could bear testimony to the fact that a great many useless and unnecessary delays occurred in the working of any scheme for the erection of labourers' cottages in Ireland. By far the larger portion of the present Bill dealt with the constitution of Boards of Guardians, and, as far as his personal experience went, he asserted that the efficiency of a Board of Guardians was not impaired by the absence of *ex officio* members. For many years the *ex officio* members of the Wexford Board, with one or two exceptions, did not attend, and the whole management of affairs had devolved upon the elected members of the Board, with the result that they had devised a system which practically did away with jobbery, and the Board was in a sound financial position. That Board was the first to work the Labourers' Acts. It was now working its fourth scheme, and when that was accomplished they would have erected more cottages than in any other union in Ireland, and within 17 of the total number erected in the whole province of Ulster. The hon. Member told the House that the labourers in Ulster did not require cottages as in other parts of Ireland.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I did not say that.

Mr. FFRENCH thought that the facts which he had stated proved that a Board of Guardians could get on very well without *ex officios*. One good feature in the Bill was that it would help to expedite matters in regard to the building of cottages. In Part 4 it was provided that an order should no longer be a provisional order, but should take effect forthwith. That would save much time, and would do away with the necessity of going before the Privy Council. As matters now stood, if only one cottage in a scheme were opposed, all the others had to wait. Such a case had actually occurred within his own knowledge. Another wretched feature in the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, which this Bill did not deal with, was this. When an order became absolute, the law enabled the Guardians to go on and build, but the Guardians, after complying with everything required by the

Acts, could not do so because the price or the rent to be paid for the land must be fixed, and, if the Guardians and the owner or occupier of the land could not agree as to this, another great delay and much expense was incurred before the Acts could be worked, the parties having to go before an arbitrator or the Land Commission to fix the price to be paid for the land. A delay of 8 or 12 months was thus incurred, during which time the unfortunate Irish agricultural labourer was left shivering in the cold in some hovel, and, perhaps, abusing the Guardians for what they were not at all to blame. He therefore suggested that there should be some clause providing for the adoption of a standard price for land until such time as the arbitrator or Land Commission could deal with the matter, when any difference in price could be paid or refunded, as the case might be; and that, meanwhile, the building might be proceeded with. There were also some other delays to which this Bill did not refer and to which it ought to refer. A good deal of time was now lost in advertising. That time should be shortened, and so much interval should not be allowed between the advertisements. Another grievance related to the matter of proportionate divisional charges. He appealed, in conclusion, to the Chief Secretary to allow the Bill to pass its Second Reading now, and to allow the requisite Amendments to be made in Committee.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said, that the last speaker appeared to be thoroughly acquainted with this subject, and had made some sound suggestions, which, however, were not to be found in the Bill. He had heard, for the first time, from the Mover of the Second Reading of this Bill, that the Ulstermen were descended from the Moslems. However that might be, he doubted whether the speech of the hon. Member would appeal to the House. They were all agreed that county government in Ireland would undergo considerable change, probably in the near future. He had always advocated treating Ireland in a similar way to that adopted by the House in treating other portions of the Empire; but this Bill was proposed to run on parallel lines with the Local Government (England and Wales) Act, to accomplish an entirely different object. Roughly, speaking, this Bill proposed to take away from the cess-payers of Ireland the power to decide how the rate was to be employed. He thought, though it might be an old-fashioned view, that the men who paid the rates ought to be the men who were to dictate how the rate should be spent and applied. If this Bill were allowed to pass, the majority of the Guardians in Ireland would be persons who paid no rates at all. He thought hon. Members below the Gangway were perfectly aware of the fact that there was no class in Ireland more opposed to an excessive expenditure of the rates than the farming class, who would look upon this Bill, when they dispassionately considered it, as one which had been introduced with the object of increasing the rates. It was a Bill which was palpably brought forward, not for any object really beneficial to the welfare and prosperity of the Irish people, but for party purposes. It altered the whole method of election of Guardians, placing such election, not on a ratepaying but on a party basis. It made the man who elected the Guardian, the same man that elected the Member who represented the division in the House of Commons; therefore, it was a party election, and they all knew how party elections were conducted in Ireland. The hon. Member for East Waterford, who seconded the Bill, said he longed to see the Irish landlords taking their proper place. The Irish landlords were always ready to take their proper place if they had a clear definition of what that proper place meant. Perhaps the hon. Member meant that that proper place would be one of honour and dignity, but after the speeches which had been made from time to time by the hon. Member's colleagues as to the proper place to which to relegate an Irish landlord, he should say that no Irish landlord would be so deluded and insane as voluntarily to occupy that favourable situation. They were told by some leading Irish politicians that the Irish landlords should be treated as doormats, to be jumped upon, and by others that their proper place was at the bottom of the Irish Channel. They were not ready to occupy these positions without, at any rate, making a protest. He contended that under this Bill, an Irish landlord, no matter how good a landlord he might be, would stand no chance at all. It was said they had the option of election, but he denied that the Bill gave any option, and although the landlords paid the major portion of the rates, they had no more chance of being elected in the majority of the Unions than they had of occupying distinguished positions in the seats below the Gangway. It might not be out of place if he drew attention to what an Irish Board of Guardians, when it was not annoyed by the presence of *ex officios*, really meant. One illustration of this kind was worth a ton of argument and rhetoric. At Tulla, in the county of Clare, a meeting of the local Board of Guardians was held for the purpose of electing a medical officer for the Tulla Union Workhouse. It would be admitted that was an important function, and that the Guardians who made the election should be in a dispassionate, calm frame of mind, and should elect the gentleman of their choice simply and solely on the ground of his qualifications. The report in the newspaper said that the proceedings were characterised by confusion and disorder. Twelve out of 13 elected Guardians were present, but only one *ex-officio* Guardian put in an appearance, and he left before the Board sat.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Where is the hon. Member quoting from?

COLONEL SAUNDERSON replied that he was quoting from an account published in the *Dublin Daily Express*. This report has never been contradicted. Personally, he knew nothing about the matter, but if the hon. Member for Clare, as Member for the Division, told them there was not one word of foundation for the statements, they would accept his assurance. He thought, however, it would be found that the hon. Gentleman would not contradict the report. The Chairman of this remarkable Board of Guardians was a Mr. Matthew Clew. The usual hour of meeting was 12 o'clock, but the Chairman did not take his seat until half-past 1, although a quorum of Guardians was in the room all the time. The report stated—

> "The scene in the room at this time was perfectly indescribable. A gentleman of the name of Thomas Kennedy treated the audience which crowded the board-room with a series of popular songs, which were rendered in capital style and received with tumultuous applause."

If Boards of Guardians never did anything worse than this there would not be much to complain of. But now came the business part of the matter. The candidates for the post of medical officer were Dr. Molony, who seemed to have the popular voice in his favour, and Dr. Stephen Scanlan. When Dr. Scanlan appeared—

> "he was treated to a torrent of invective by one of the crowd, who jumped on the Board table and, evidently labouring under intense excitement, hurled a series of allegations against Dr. Scanlan, who was smilingly smoking a cigarette with the utmost composure amidst the shouts of the crowd. When the chairman took his seat there was not the slightest effort made to clear the room."

It appeared that the Boards of Guardians assembled at Tulla required a considerable force of police present in order to ensure anything like order. On this occasion there was "a force of 40 police outside"—they ought to have been inside—specially drafted for the occasion. After transacting some ordinary business, the chairman found it impossible to proceed.

> "Several members of the crowd jumped on the Board table, amid the correspondence and books, and shouted that there should be two doctors in the union."

The Resolution in support of Dr. Molony was declared to be carried, though it turned out that no one proposed and no one seconded him. The chairman in vain called for order, and then the clerk, Mr. Murphy, who evidently appreciated the situation,

> "snatching up his books, beat a hasty retreat, while a man was executing a war dance on the table. In the closing scenes one of the crowd caught the vice-chairman, Mr. Corbett, by his coat, and immediatelytwo young fellows jumped on the Board table and struck the man a violent blow in the face."

That Report was made some time ago, and it had never been contradicted. If the House further increased what was called the popular element in these Boards of Guardians this scene would be the predominant order of things in many Board meetings. What the hon. Members from Ireland professed to desire by this Bill, but which they did not attain, was economy in the administration of the Poor Law in Ireland. The Bill wanted a more popular representation on these Boards, especially of those who paid no rates. A man who paid no rates would have far less desire than the man who did to carry on the management of the union to which he belonged, at any rate with economy. He maintained, therefore, that the clauses of the Bill which dealt with elections of Guardians were simply a certain method to render the expenditure in the unions of Ireland probably fivefold or sixfold greater than it was at present. As to the housing of labourers, he said that there was no subject in relation to Ireland which more entirely enlisted his sympathy. The hon. Gentleman who seconded the Motion cast certain aspersions on the landlords because they had not done their duty in the position in which they had been placed. He should like some information as to the number of cottages erected for labourers in Ireland by hon. Members who sat below the Gangway or above it on the other side. The Irish landlords themselves had done more in the direction of housing the labouring classes than any other class in the country, and to that statement he defied contradiction to be given. He trusted that when a County Government Bill for Ireland was introduced and passed through the House (he hoped before long) it would contain a provision giving far larger facilities than at present existed, in order to give Irish labourers better houses, their own homes, and a certain portion, at any rate, of their own land. Dealing with the appeal which at present existed to the Privy Council, and the argument of hon. Members that there had been a change of opinion in Ireland, he said that public opinion in Ireland had a way of asserting itself and of going far beyond the ordinary rules of argument. The man who founded his hope on the continuity of Irish affection would some day find himself sadly deluded As an example of this, he pointed to the Chief Secretary. In 1889 there was no more popular man in Ireland than the right hon. Gentleman. At that time he could go all over Ireland without police protection; could he do so now? The Nationalist Press used to say that the right hon. Gentleman's name was a very popular one; but the other day he read in a Nationalist paper with a great circulation a description of the right hon. Gentleman. It summed up the right hon. Gentleman's character thus:—

> "He has the cruelty of a Caligula and the unbridled vice of a Heliogabalus."

*Mr. SPEAKER interposed amid laughter, and reminded the hon. and gallant Gentleman that he was not speaking to the subject before the House.

Colonel SAUNDERSON said, that hon. Members from Ireland assumed that they alone had the cause of the Irish labourers at heart. He did not wonder at any politician being inclined to devote his attention to acquiring the sympathies of the Irish labourer, for undoubtedly the Irish working men would in Ireland, as in England and Sotland, have a hand in returning Members to the House. But those who had most opposed the erection of labourers' cottages in Ireland had, undoubtedly, been the farmers. Perhaps this Bill was brought forward to induce the labourers to believe that the main object of hon. Members was to serve them. He did not believe that such was the main object. Every law required the sanction of punishment following disobedience; and the building of labourers' cottages was intended as the punishment for those who disobeyed the political views of hon. Members below the Gangway. He remembered pointing out to the House three or four years ago that a Board of Guardians in Ireland had come to the distinct determination not to obtain a labourer's cottage for any man who could not show that he was on the right side. If this Bill were passed, any farmer who opposed the policy of hon. Gentlemen would find cottages springing up like toadstools all over his holding, and converting agricultural land into a village. This Bill, far from providing an economic method of administering the Poor Law in Ireland, would quadruple expenditure. It would be the dearest Bill ever passed by the House of Commons; and, with such elections as that in Tulla union frequently occurring, instead of improving Ireland it would turn the country into a pauperised pandemonium.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND said, that the hon. and gallant Gentleman had referred to the Tulla Union in

County Clare. The Chief Secretary would be able to corroborate the statement that the proceedings of the Tulla Poor Law Board were conducted as well and as regularly as those of any Poor Law Board in the whole of Ireland. There was undoubtedly some excitement at the election to which the hon. and gallant Gentleman referred, but the report which the hon. and gallant Gentleman had read to the House was extremely exaggerated, and too much reliance could not be placed on it.

DR. TANNER (Cork County, Mid) said that, in spite of the strong remarks of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, the supporters of the Bill were only trying to do their best for the Irish labourers, and he hoped that the Chief Secretary would second their efforts. He appealed to all sides of the House to assist the poor and suffering class of labourers in Ireland.

MR. J. MORLEY: It must have struck the House, while the hon. and gallant Gentleman was speaking, that there was an extraordinary inconsistency between the position with which he began and that with which he ended. He declared his profound anxiety to give to his own country all those institutions of Local Government which are possessed in England and Scotland. But the most attractive and amusing part of his speech, and that which gave real point to it, was a description of certain proceedings, more or less mythical, at Tulla Union. If that description meant anything, it was meant to discredit Local Government, or any extension of it, in the hon. and gallant Gentleman's own country. He said, as he often says, that he is proud of being an Irishman. If I were an Irishman, there is one thing I would not do. I would not pick out of the columns of *The Dublin Daily Express* exaggerated accounts of every little squabble or squall which arrises in a local body in Ireland, and read it out in the House of Commons in order to expose my countrymen to the ridicule and disparagement of those to whom he ought to show the better side. It has been pointed out that the connection between the two portions of this Bill is not perfectly obvious. I agree that there is no precise logical conclusion between the fourth part of the Bill dealing with labourers' cottages, and the fifth part dealing with the election of Boards of Guardians; and, though we have had some extremely interesting speeches on the labourers' cottages part of the Bill, I do not intend now to deal with that portion. It certainly is not because I think lightly of the importance of the subject. On the contrary, I think that what was said by the hon. Member for Antrim, and by Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Little in their reports, all shows that the condition of labourers' cottages in Ireland is one of the many deplorable facts in the social condition of that country. At the end of last Session I promised that I would devote some time in the Recess to the condition of the labourers, and the possibility of amending Legislation with respect to labourers' cottages. I have done what I promised, and I have ready for Introduction at the earliest possible moment a Bill dealing with the various defects which experience has brought to light in the Labourers Acts in Ireland. Those defects are mainly two—the loss of time and the largeness of expenditure; and when the time comes—and if it does not come quickly, I shall not be to blame—I shall be ready to lay the Government's proposals before the House. The portion of the present Bill which deals with this extremely important part of the subject strikes me as rather patchwork, and as not dealing thoroughly with the intricate and complex question. I do not think that these proposals would achieve the two great objects I have mentioned—the saving of time and the saving of expense. The hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh, who moved the rejection of this Bill, made some remarks on the proposal to abolish the appeal to the Privy Council. I feel with him that it is indispensable that there should be some deliberate consideration of all the objections which may be made to schemes in their final stage. But from all that I have heard since I took Office, I do not believe that the Privy Council—not the Judicial Committee, but the gentlemen who deal with these labourers' cottages schemes—is a tribunal in which you can expect Irish popular opinion to acquiesce as a final tribunal. Whether the final tribunal ought to be the Local Government Board, perhaps sitting with a legal assessor, or whether it ought to be the County Court, I do not say. But I do not think that any proposal for retaining the appeal where it is now would meet with the assent of the Government. There is one provision in this part of the Bill on which I will say a word. It is the proposal that the Sanitary Authority shall have the power to enter into purchase contracts which the Land Commission shall advance the money to carry out. That proposal was first made in 1892, and on that occasion the present Leader of the Opposition took the view that to do this would be to run a risk of draining away some portion of the funds which Parliament vested for the transformation of holdings into freeholds. I am bound to say, after careful consideration, that I entirely concur in what the right hon. Gentleman said tn 1892, and certainly in our proposals there will be no suggestion of that kind. In giving our assent to the Second Reading of this Bill it must not be understood that we assent to that proposal, or to any detail in the labourers' cottages part of the Bill. The Bill was described by the hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading as an exact assimilation of the procedure at the election of Boards of Guardians in Ireland with that provided for England and Wales in the Local Government Act of 1893. I have gone carefully through the proposals in the Bill, and have compared them with the English enactments, and it seems to me that the gentlemen who have framed this Bill have, on the whole, carefully reproduced, or transcribed, and applied to Ireland, the clauses of the English and Welsh Act. I think hon. Gentlemen opposite must have found themselves in a peculiar position. They have said they were in favour of giving Ireland all that local self-government which has been given to local bodies in England and Wales. The hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh did, it is true, decline to slavishly devote himself to following an English analogy, but I have noticed this peculiar thing: that, although hon. Gentlemen opposite say that, short of anything like Home Rule, they were not only willing but eager and anxious in every case to give to Ireland exactly the same local Franchise functions, duties, and privileges which are possessed in corresponding form in this country—again, I admit that the hon. Member for Mid Armagh said it was cant to say that Ireland ought to adopt the same system as England and Wales—that while others, like the hon. Member for Antrim, said they have always advocated the extension of local self-government in Ireland on the English system, yet—and are we not familiar with the formula?—whenever there is a specific proposal, we find there is, unfortunately, something exceptional in the measure, and then we hear the argument *mutatis mutandis.* We are told the machinery is defective, or that the Bill is vitiated by some minor defects. We have constant asseverations of the desire and intention to take every opportunity—and I do not know why this afternoon should not be an opportunity—to give Ireland the same privileges of Local Government as England enjoys, but still we find these Bills opposed. There are, I suppose, two really important proposals, or sets of proposals, in this Bill: the one being the abolition of *ex-officio* Guardians, the other the substitution of the ballot for voting by papers. With regard to the second of these, I have not heard one single objection which would not apply to any proposal of the kind for election by ballot. There would be, it has been said, thousands of contested elections, enormous expenditure, and if against any election there was right of appeal there would be an indefinite number of petitions all involving expense to the ratepayers and a great deal of local turmoil. Every one of these arguments was applied in old days against the extension of local self-government in this country. Can you not trust the Irish people? You say you are in favour of giving Ireland local self-government, though you will not allow an Irish Parliament. Let us assume the existence among the Irish people of local common-sense. Can you suppose, if a local authority becomes invested, as is proposed, with such powers as are contained in the Bill—such as the ballot and the test of disputed elections in judicial form—can you suppose that they would allow all this multiplication of contested elections and petitions, and all this outlay of every kind of which the hon. and learned Member opposite drew such a formidable picture? I have always been told that the Irish farmer and ratepayer is rather sordid than otherwise—I do not use that word; but my own observation is, that they are not at all men to encourage a multiplication of elections or petitions leading to confusion and an excessive expenditure, a portion of which—I do not want to say more than that—must come out of their own pockets. As to the disorder and turmoil, I can only say that, during my short *régime* there have come to my knowledge many instances of disorder in connection with the distribution and collection of voting papers, the police having had to interefere in many cases where disturbance and intimidation arose. Well, voting by ballot would put an end to that. I do not know that it could introduce further disorder peculiar to that form of voting. If, as an hon. Member has said, an Irishman is the victim of an universal and deep-rooted system of intimidation, then what better means of delivering him from that intimidation is there than, instead of putting into his hands an open voting paper, in the filling up of which he may be open to influence, that he should go to the poll and vote exactly as he pleases? I do not say that it is possible to prevent all forms of intimidation, but certainly the ballot is a step towards putting an end to disorder and intimidation at these elections. And now to turn to the more important part of the Bill—the proposal for the abolition of *ex-officio* Guardians. The point is not unnaturally made, and hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway must have anticipated it, that in answers I have given to questions put to me the the words I used bind me to the inference the hon. Gentleman quoted them drew—namely, that because the incidence of local rating in Ireland is different to that in England, it is therefore unreasonable to transfer to Ireland that abolition of *ex-officio* Guardians, which Parliament has thought right to adopt here. The hon. Member for Armagh says that in Ireland the landlords over a quarter of all the holdings in Ireland pay the whole of the rates, and that they pay half the rates over the remaining portion of the whole area of Ireland. I do not know whether that is exactly correct, but, roughly speaking, that is an accurate description of the situation. Is that a reason—this difference in the incidence of rating—why the present system of *ex-officio* Guardians should be left as it now stands? At present, I believe, the only limit to *ex-officio* Members is, that they must not exceed the number of elected Guardians, that not more than half of the Board must consist of *ex-officio* Guardians. Now, my answer to the hon. Member for Armagh may be called a *tu quoque*; but it is more when I point out that every argument used by hon. Gentlemen opposite this afternoon about *ex-officio* Guardians and local rates would apply equally against the system of which they are strenuous upholders—I mean the grand jury system in Ireland. How is it that those who are so sensitive about those who pay the rates being represented on the Boards, which levy and administer the rates, have not a word to say about the county cess which is paid by occupying farmers, but is levied and administered, not by representatives of occupiers, but by the grand jury? I will say nothing as to the administration, but, judging the system as it stands, can you contend that any argument brought this afternoon against the abolition of *ex-officio* Guardians does not strike at the very root of all your grand jury system?

MR. MACARTNEY, interrupting, explained that he said he was prepared to support a system which provided something equivalent to county government, but his objection to the Bill was that it dealt with only a small portion of the subject.

MR. J. MORLEY: What I would say is this—that for 48 years, I think, it has been admitted, and it has been recorded—admitted by both Parties, just as the hon. Gentleman admits it — that the grand jury system ought to be reformed, but there it is; and when the present Leader of the Opposition brought in his Bill for the better local government of Ireland, he did so with a remark to the comparative appreciation of his own legislative proposals which made the House feel that he was not very much in earnest in requiring the particular reform. Another remark I have to make is this: Why should not these gentlemen who now sit as *ex officio* members be elected? The hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite seems to suppose that landlords would have no chance of being elected to the Board. He knows Ireland in some aspects better than I do, but I know of a considerable number of cases where a landlord has been Chairman of a Board of Guardians, and I know of one instance where a landlord was Chairman for 17 years.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said, that would be by *ex officio* votes.

MR. J. MORLEY: No doubt; but I believe in the case I have in mind the Chairman was not elected by *ex officio* members. But, anyhow, what an awful vision does it give us into the state of things, that landlords who have had this power so long should suppose that, if the franchise were extended and *ex officio* members abolished, they would have little chance of being chosen. That is not a reason for retaining the *ex officio* system. By way of illustration that those who pay the rates should spend them, there is a large number of men who pay heavy rates in London, but have no *ex officio* representation on the County Council. I have every desire to be fair to the landlords, but I really cannot see that by removing the *ex officio* magistrates, and by doing away, as we have done in England and Wales, with the cumulative vote by which a scale of valuation entitles a man to a rising number of votes—I cannot see why they should rely on these artificial devices instead of making it their business to conciliate the public opinion by which they are surrounded. But the effort will never be made so long as these artificial provisions are supplied by this Parliament. There are one or two details in the Bill which seem to me to be open to considerable remark. Its main proposals, as I take them, are—boards are to be entirely elective; Guardians are to hold office for three years instead of for one year, as under the existing law; the proposed changes in the electorate, and that it is to be the existing Local Government electorate in Ireland *plus* the Parliamentary electorate; the abolition of the cumulative vote—that is, one elector to have one vote for each of a number of persons to be elected in substitution of the ballot; and the contesting of these elections, when occasion arises, before the County Court Judge. These are the main provisions of the Bill with which I concur. Parliamentary time is scarce, but if the Bill progresses I shall be bound to support it, though I must not be understood as going back one inch from the position which I have held ever since this controversy arose nine years ago—that in altering Local Government in Ireland you are beginning at the wrong end. You will not achieve the same results, so far as my expectation goes, by any extension of Local Government in Ireland as in England; but, so long as this House reserves to itself the power of regulating Irish affairs and prescribing the schemes by which Irish affairs shall be governed, I shall be bound on every occasion to support the proposals which tend in the popular and national direction.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Longford, N.): My hon. Friend the Member for North Mayo, who brought in this Bill, has every reason to be satisfied with the reception it has got from the Government. For myself I am quite willing to meet the Government in any suggestion they may have to make with regard to the Bill now, and I find that the main purpose and spirit of the Bill seem to be in accord. With respect to the part referring to the labourers, whatever may be afterwards done as to the division of one part of the Bill from the other, we felt bound, as my hon. Friend said in his speech, to take the very first opportunity we could to endeavour to do something to improve the condition of those labourers for whose cause we have fought so long in and out of the House of Commons. That was why we endeavoured to make the Bill compact for two purposes not naturally coming together. We want to save time in every way, and to get as far as we can in our efforts in order to improve the condition of the Irish labourers. But I have no doubt we shall now be able to meet the ideas of the Government on the subject, as I understand that the right hon. Gentleman will assent to the Government doing all in their power to press this question of the labourers to an early and satisfactory conclusion. I only want now to express the hope that the House will be allowed to Divide on this question so that we may have something to show for the time occupied and the arguments employed on both sides of the House, and so that the discussion may have a definite and a proper conclusion.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The hon. Gentleman has just expressed a desire that the House may be allowed to come to a Division on this Bill, and after what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman opposite, I do not see why the House should be put to the trouble of a Division at all. The Government do not seem altogether ready to accept the Bill, and hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway seem ready to support the Government in not attempting to support the Bill. The Chief Secretary has made some very interesting remarks upon the subject of Local Government in Ireland, and he seemed anxious to adopt portions of this Bill as being instalments towards the settlement of this question. For my part, I am not prepared to admit either that this subject ought to be dealt with in small instalments, or that the question of Local Government in Ireland should be settled by a Bill brought in by a private Member. The great questions of English and Scotch Local Government have always been treated by successive Governments as subjects of first-class importance; measures dealing with them successfully and adequately have always been Government measures, and I do not believe that the Irish question is so much more easy to deal with than the English or the Scotch that a different plan, with any hope of success, can be adopted, Therefore, I do not think this is a serious effort at Legislation, but it seems to constitute a Wednesday afternoon discussion, not so much on the provisions of the Bill, as really upon some abstract provision underlying the Bill; and that abstract provision, as I understand, is that the system of Local Government in Ireland requires reform, and that that reform should go in the direction of giving a much larger measure of popular control in Ireland than at present the ratepayers of that country possess. Those are propositions with which I heartily agree. They are propositions which I endeavoured to carry into effect—at any rate, which I embodied in the Bill of 1892—and which I would have carried into effect had circumstances not made it impossible. But we must remember that the conditions of social life in Ireland at the present moment are such, that it is impossible that we should not feel the necessity of introducing safeguards which might be unnecessary in England. It has been said, in the course of the Debate, that the landlords have controlled Irish destinies for centuries, and therefore, if they now find themselves in such a position as to have little or no chance of being elected on these popular bodies, they have themselves to blame. I do not intend to argue the historical question, but there does prevail in Ireland a condition—I will not say of social disease, but rather of social weakness, liable at any moment to disease—which makes it necessary for us to take precautions on this side of the channel. I do not think any section in politics will be prepared to deny that, and, therefore, do not let us, out of pure pedantry, content ourselves by saying that such and such a measure had been passed for England and Scotland, and, therefore, we may apply it without consideration as to the peculiar conditions of Irish life. I am sure, whether this Government or any other Government brings in a Bill dealing with Irish Local Government, they will feel the necessity of weighing well the matters which I have laid before the House. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that he does not mean to have anything to do with the last part of the Bill; he has declined to commit himself. He has expressed a general adhesion to certain principles, but I take it from what has fallen from the Government in the first place, and from hon. Gentlemen in the second place, that the discussion this afternoon is practically reduced to a Debate as to whether or not the existing artificial system of Local Government in Ireland does or does not require reform. In my opinion it does. I am prepared to range myself on the side of those who think some modification—some great modification—is necessary in the existing system, and that large portions of the machinery of Local Government in Ireland are really contemptible. Therefore I will not go into the Lobby against the Second Reading of the Bill, nor will I advise any friend of mine who may agree with the general principles I have laid down to put the House to the trouble of a Division.

Motion agreed to.

MR. CRILLY moved that the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Law.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Is that, Sir, a question which we can debate now?

*Mr. SPEAKER assented.

Mr. BALFOUR: Then, speaking for myself, Sir, that proceeding is one that we cannot assent to without consideration. Reference of the Bill to the Grand Committee on Law has the effect of abolishing the Committee stage in this House, and a Grand Committee is emphatically not the machinery that ought to be applied to questions in which Party considerations may lead to controversy. It must be still fresh in the recollection of many hon. Members that when the system of Grand Committees was introduced by the late Prime Minister it was on the whole in favour, but it seemed in favour only on the distinct understanding that non-controversial measures—non-controversial measures alone—would be submitted to it. Now I think this question should be argued apart from the merits or demerits. It should be argued in view of the general propriety of our proceedings. If you insist on referring to a Grand Committee measures of this kind, you will inevitably break to pieces the machine by putting it to work for which it was never intended, never suited, and never constructed. Therefore, quite apart from the merits of this Bill and the necessity of dealing with Local Government in Ireland, I do earnestly beg those responsible for the management of the business of the House—I earnestly appeal to the right hon. Gentleman opposite—not to attempt, at all events without notice, to compel us to such an innovation in our habitual procedure as would be involved by accepting the Motion to refer this Bill to a Grand Committee. Sir, I think the considerations I have laid before the House will appeal to every one irrespective of Party. We had no notice that any such proposal would be made.

Mr. E. F. VESEY KNOX (Cavan, W.) said, that notice would have been given had it been possible in accordance with the forms of the House.

Mr. BALFOUR: I do not so much mean public notice. I mean it was understood by those who act with me that we should not divide on this Bill, and that there was no controversy involved. Many hon. Gentlemen have gone away on that understanding, absolutely ignorant that a proposal of the most controversial character would be sprung upon us at the last moment, and that by forces diminished by the natural operation of causes with which every one of us is familiar, we should have to meet a proposal which would, if adopted, have far-reaching consequences, going to the very root of the legislative work of this House. I hope the Government will not accept this proposal, or if they think it worthy of acceptance, they will permit us to defer the discussion of it to a time when the House will have full notice that it will be made, and we shall be able to bring such forces as we can into the field on behalf of opinions which we think are of the greatest possible importance, apart from the interest of local Government in Ireland.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The speech of the right hon. Gentleman on the Second Reading and the remarks he has just made have been conceived in a spirit with which no one can find fault. What he said about the first invention of Grand Committees, when my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian was Prime Minister, is, in some respects not to be complained of. It was certainly understood that violently contentious measures were not to be referred to Grand Committees. But then I ask myself whether we can call a Bill violently contentious that has just been read a second time without a Division. Now it occurs to me that what took place last year in connection with the Scotch Local Government Bill is germane to the present situation. There you had a Bill which, in substance and principle, was desired in different quarters of the House, and that Bill was referred to a Committee specially constituted of representatives of the nation which would be affected. On this occasion the only proposal is that this Bill, which has been read a second time, should be referred to a Committee of a perfectly representative and impartial character. Under the circumstances—though I am sorry to resist the views of the right hon. Gentleman after the tone he has shown in respect of the Bill itself, and though I rather deprecate making this Motion without formal notice that it would be discussed—in spite of that, I am prepared to assent to the proposal of the hon. Member.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I think my right hon. Friend is mistaken, as was also my right hon. Friend opposite, with regard to notice. I am informed that on more than one occasion notice has been given to refer Bills of this kind to a Grand Committee. Certainly, if such a Motion is at any time to be made, it is desirable that the House should know.

MR. J. MORLEY: I should have said it is possible to give notice, but it is not necessary. It was a mistake on my part.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I admit it is not necessary, but if it is possible to give notice, this is clearly one of those occasions on which the promoters of the Bill should not have attempted to take the House by surprise. My right hon. Friend gave an unfortunate illustration when he referred to the Scotch Committee. He will recollect that the proposal to refer the Scotch Local Government Bill to that Committee was strenuously opposed, and only carried by a small majority. On that occasion, among many other objections taken to the proposal, was that it would be carrying further than was ever intended by those who created Grand Committees the references to those Committees. The Leader of the Opposition has dealt with the matter on its general merits, but I venture to think there is a particular reason, in the case of this Bill, why it should not go to a Grand Committee. As I understand, the Chief Secretary himself in dealing with the Bill has dealt critically and severely with some portions of it, and, as regards those clauses which deal with the labourers, said that they required alteration, and gave the House to understand that to those portions of the Bill as they stood, the Government would not give their assent. It is extremely important in regard to matters of that kind that the refusal of the Government to assent should be a refusal which will be conclusive as regards those portions of the Bill. It was only on the assurance that the Government would oppose certain portions of the Measure that it has been allowed to go to a Second Reading without a Division. Everyone who knows anything about Grand Committees is aware that, although they may be, in a sense, a microcosm of the House they are not Committees in which the Government exercises the same authority as in the House. In fact, these Committees have never been conducted on strictly Party lines. There has never been a Government Whip in reference to them, and accordingly the Divisions do not necessarily give to the Government their full authority; and the assurance, therefore, which the Chief Secretary for Ireland has given to us with regard to the intentions of the Government, are assurances which, if the Bill goes to a Grand Committee, I think he is likely to find himself unable to perform. What is the result of that? Are we to break down this system of Grand Committees by leaving to the Report stage all the discussion we hoped to raise at the Committee stage? In my opinion the Government will do more than anything else to break down this system, which I entirely support, which is most useful, and capable of further development—by continually referring to Grand Committees Bills which are not proper subjects for them. The understanding at the time Grand Committees were established was not only that strictly contentious measures should not be referred to these Committees, but that no measures which involved general questions of policy should be sent to them. The Government made a deplorable exception in the case of the Scotch Bill, and I think they will make a great mistake if they press their view that the same course should be taken now. I hope, at the last moment, seeing there is strong opposition to the suggestion that this Bill should be referred to a Grand Committee, the Chief Secretary will allow this Bill to be treated in Committee in this House in the ordinary way.

MR. W. E. MACARTNEY rose amid cries of "Divide."

MR. CRILLY: I move "That the Question be now put."

MR. MACARTNEY Moved the adjournment of the Debate, in order to protest against the course to which the Chief Secretary was assenting. The second reading of this Bill would never have been agreed to without a Division if his hon. Friends had known it would be proposed to refer the Bill to a Standing Committee. The Chief Secretary would be unable to show a single precedent for the course proposed to be taken. In 1890 the present Leader of the Opposition objected to the Police Pensions Bill, which had passed its Second Reading, being referred to a Standing Committee, on the ground that it was not of the class of Bills which Standing Committees were intended to consider. This Bill had an important bearing on Local Government in Ireland. Would the House have sanctioned for a moment a Bill establishing District or Parish Councils in England being referred to a Standing Committee? Of course not! On the Opposition side of the House they had good reason to complain of the manner in which they had been treated. If the course now being adopted were to be pursued to the bitter end it would be a lesson to some of them for the future in regard to measures promoted by hon. Members below the Gangway.

MR. BYLES moved "That the question be now put."

*MR. SPEAKER said, seeing that the Motion to refer the Bill to a Standing Committee had been made without notice, and had been under discussion for so short a time, he did not think the Motion now made ought to be put.

It being now half-past five o'clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES ACT (1893) AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) moved the Second Reading of this Bill, stating that one object was to provide a means for the settlement of disputes between the Registrars for Ireland and Scotland, and that the measure had the approval of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies.

Bill read 2°.

REPORT OF SUPPLY.

The Report of Supply (March 12) was brought up and agreed to.

RULE OF THE ROAD AT SEA.

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [27th February],—

'That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the objections which have been raised to adoption by Order in Council of Rule 15 of the revised International Regulations for preventing collisions at sea, dealing with sound signals in fog, as suggested by the Washington Conference, and considered by the Maritime Powers."—*(Sir Donald Currie.)*

And which Amendment was, to leave out from the word "raised," in line 2, to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"Order in Council of the 30th day of January, 1893, relative to the fixing and screening of ships' side-lights, and to adoption by Order in Council of the sound signals prescribed by Article 15 and Article 28 of the Revised Regulations for preventing Collisions at Sea, as set forth in the Board of Trade Circular to Shipowners on 6th of March, 1894."—*(Mr. T. Gibson Bowles.)*

Question again proposed,—"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) appealed to the President of the Board of Trade to withdraw his block and refrain from objection to the amendment, or else to provide some opportunity when the Resolution and the Amendment might be discussed and divided upon, and not to leave them in their present position to be kicked across the Table of the House in the time for unopposed business.

*SIR DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.) said, the shipowners were satisfied with the Committee on fog signals, which had been promised by the Government, and he asked leave to inquire of the President of the Board of Trade what progress he had made with the formation of the Committee which he promised to a deputation, on the screening of ships' side lights.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said he had now succeeded in forming a Committee in fulfilment of the pledge he gave to the deputation. The Committee would consist of one eminent shipbuilder, in the hon. Baronet the Member for Belfast (Sir E. Harland), three eminent shipowners, including Mr. Ismay, of the White Star Line, and the hon. Member for Southampton (Sir F. Evans), three shipmasters, an eminent Admiralty lawyer, and two Naval Officers, whom he had selected in consultation with the First Lord of the Admiralty. This was an impartial Committee, consisting of men who would be fully masters of the subject. He had thought it better not to put on any representative of the Board of Trade. The Committee would be ready to sit shortly, and he trusted that in these circumstances the hon. Member opposite would do nothing further to retard the settlement of the question. Personally he had carried out the pledge that he gave to the deputation representing the shipping interest that they should have a technical committee to examine into the side lights question; and he had also carried out, as far as he could, the pledge which he gave to the hon. Member for West Perthshire (Sir Donald Currie.)

Mr. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) said, he had taken an interest in this question, and knew that the feeling of shipowners and of the Chamber of Shipping was that the matter should go forward in the manner proposed. He therefore implored the hon. Member for Lynn Regis not to continue his opposition to the course taken by the President of the Board of Trade, because the appointment of a Committee was the only means by which they could bring about an amicable solution of the question.

***Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES** said, this was not exclusively a shipowners' question, and he disputed the assertion that the shipping interest and, above all, that seamen were in favour of his abandoning the Amendment, which he declined to withdraw.

***Mr. SPEAKER** said, in that case the matter must stand over.

***Sir DONALD CURRIE** said, he was perfectly satisfied with the response of the President of the Board of Trade, and he hoped the hon. Member would not persist in his opposition.

TELEPHONE SERVICE.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS moved—

> "That the Committee do consist of 15 Members. That Captain Bagot, Mr. Baird, Mr. Benn, Sir C. Cameron, Mr. John Ellis, Sir J. Fergusson, Mr. Bryce, Sir J. Goldsmid, Sir J. Gorst, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. Solicitor General, Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. Moulton, Mr. Snape, Lord Stanley, and Mr. Tully be Members of the Committee. That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records. That five be the quorum."

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) appealed to the Postmaster General to reconsider the list of names with the view of giving a larger representation to the City.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Arnold Morley, Nottingham, E.) said, that London already had three Members, which was more than its share as compared with the representation of the rest of the country.

Mr. A. C. MORTON said, that two of the three Members represented the County Council, and it could not be said that one was a fair representation of the City. The hon. Member persisted in his objection.

Motion deferred.

MOTION.

CRIMINAL LAW PROCEDURE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lloyd Morgan, Bill to amend the Criminal Law Procedure in certain particulars.

Bill presented accordingly, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 27th March, and to be printed. [Bill 168.]

On the Motion "That the House do now adjourn,"

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS, in reply to Mr. Sidney Herbert and Mr. Cremer, said the Army Estimates would be the first Order for March 14, and it was impossible to say definitely when the Navy Estimates would come on again.

Sir W. LAWSON (Carlisle) gave notice that on the Money Vote for the Navy he should move a reduction.

House adjourned at Fifteen Minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 14th March 1895.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent—

1. Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894, Amendment.
2. Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland).

The Commissioners were the Lord Chancellor, the Marquess of Breadalbane, and Lord Kensington.

CONVENTION OF ROYAL BURGHS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1879, AMENDMENT BILL.

House in Committee (according to order); Bills reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

LAND TRANSFER BILL. [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

LARCENY ACT AMENDMENT BILL. [H.L.]

Read 3^a (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

PERJURY BILL. [H.L.]

Read 3^a (according to order); Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 14th March 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

THE AMERICAN MAIL SERVICE.

Return ordered showing the number of days, hours and minutes occupied in the transit of Her Majesty's mails, both outward and inward, carried during the year 1894 by steamships between Queenstown and New York, and also between Southampton and New York; the Return to specify the names of the steamers, and to indicate by asterisks or otherwise those not carrying the Mails under contract (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 72, of Session 1894.)—*(Sir J. Leng.)*

COMMISSION.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners;—

The House went;—and, having returned;—

*MR. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to,—

Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894, Amendment Act, 1895.

Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act, 1895.

QUESTIONS.

SALE OF VOTERS' LISTS IN COUNTY CORK.

MR. D. SHEEHY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what (1) explanation is given by the Clerk of the Peace for the County of Cork of his having omitted to lodge the moneys received by him for registers in 1892 until 17th August 1894; (2) when the Return on the subject was presented to Parliament; (3) why the Clerk of the Peace in Galway omitted to lodge the amounts until a question was put on the Notice Paper of the House of Commons this Session; (4) whether he will cause these Gentlemen to put in a Return showing the amounts received in each year for each constituency in their county, and whether any copies were supplied gratis in contravention of the Statute; and, if so, for what reason; (5) whether it can be ascertained if in the counties and boroughs of Cork and Galway any revenue has been derived from this source since the passing of the Statute 13 & 14 Vic. c. 69; and, if so, what is the amount; (6) what authority may be invoked to control the Clerks of the Peace in these matters; (7) and whether, in view of the many discrepancies shown in the Return, and the long delay which may take place before sums are placed to credit, he would direct a sworn inquiry into the whole subject?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): (1) The Clerk of the Peace for the County Cork, E. Riding, states in explanation of the delay in lodging the sums received for sale of Parliamentary Voters Lists in 1892 until the 25th July, not 17th August, 1894, that the moneys were received by an assistant in his office, and that until he was informed of the hon. Gentleman's question he knew nothing of the matter. He promises to take care in future that all such receipts are duly accounted for to the County Treasurer. (2) The Return in question was presented to Parliament on the 14th August and ordered to be printed on the 17th August, 1894. (3) It would appear to be a fact that the Clerks of the Peace for the County Galway and Borough of Galway did not lodge the sums so received by them until the House had ordered the Return in question. (4) The Clerks of the Peace referred to state that the Returns furnished by them contain all sums received by them from this source, and that they have now duly accounted for same to the County Treasurers for each year for each constituency in their county. The Town Clerk of Cork alone admits that he supplied copies without charge according to the custom which has prevailed in his office. (5) The Clerk of the Peace for County Galway states that it does not appear that any sums were received under the Act 13 & 14 Vic. c. 69 prior to the year 1885. All the Clerks concerned now state that they have duly accounted for all receipts in connection with the sale of Voters' Lists. (6 and 7) I am advised that there is no precedent for the Government directing any such inquiry as suggested. Clerks of the Peace appointed before August, 1877, are not Government officers, and Clerks appointed since that date are removable only by the Lord Chancellor and for misconduct or incapacity, and they are not in any sense under the control of the Executive Government.

KILRONAN PIER, ARRAN ISLAND.

MR. D. SHEEHY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the pier at Kilronan, on Arran Island, is in its present condition practically useless for the protection of fishing vessels; whether he will have inquiry made as to its condition, and what the probable cost would be to put it in a serviceable state; and whether, in view of the distress now prevalent on the islands, he will try and have the works found necessary to be done undertaken either by the Board of Public Works in Ireland, or by the Congested Districts Board?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the pier at Kilronan is in good repair, and largely used by fishing boats, but that the space protected is inadequate. No definite estimate of the expenditure that would be required to extend the pier has been obtained, but I believe about £5,000 would be necessary. The pier is vested, however, in the County under the 16 & 17 Vic. c. 136, and any extension of it must apparently be undertaken by the Grand Jury.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. D. SHEEHY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the resolution of the Gort Board of Guardians at its meeting on the 2nd instant, in which it is shown, by the representations of the local clergy, the secretary of the private relief committee, and a deputation of about 300 seeking employment, that considerable destitution prevails amongst that class of people who cannot legally be relieved from the rates; and, whether he will cause an inspector of the Local Government Board to be sent to the union to inquire into the condition of the class of people indicated, with the view of causing such relief works to be started as would meet the distress?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have received a copy of the resolution in question. The Local Government Board's inspector has visited the district, and reports that the potato crop in the Gort Union compared favourably with the crop in many other districts in this part of the country. The relieving officers had no cases of able-bodied persons requiring relief in their books, and the Inspector was informed that with a continuance of fine weather it would be difficult to get sufficient labourers to meet the requirements of the district. No abnormal destitution prevails, so I am told, among the small landholders; the Local Government Board, however, will authorise the Guardians to relax the restrictions on outdoor relief for a time in the Union.

In answer to a further question, Mr. J. Morley said: All that I am able to say is that the potato crop there compares favourably with that in other places in the country; and all the means that the authorities have of testing the matter show that in this case there is not that special requirement to lead us to take the steps which the hon. Member desires.

Mr. J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the proceedings of a large meeting at Inver, County Donegal, on Sunday 3rd March, presided over by the Rev. P. M'Cafferty, administrator of the parish, in which it was stated that public works in that district were required at once, or that starvation would be the result; whether since the 16th February last, on which date a public letter from the Member for South Donegal appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, describing the destitution in this locality, of which he was an eyewitness, any Local Government Board Inspector has visited this district; what is the date of the last and second last visits of a Local Government Board Inspector to Inver, and may his reports, if any, be produced; and whether, having regard to the evidence of distress that has been placed before him in this locality, he will institute immediately relief works?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board's Inspector has visited the Donegal union on two occasions since the 16th January, and on the 28th February he made careful inquiries into the condition of the people of Inver. On the 2nd February he was present at the meeting of the Board of Guardians and inquired whether they considered it desirable to apply for authority to relax the restrictions on outdoor relief, but this the Guardians did not require. Inspectors' reports of this kind have always been regarded as confidential, and it would not be expedient or advisable to make them public. The result of the Inspector's inquiries show that although some families in this locality are in very straitened circumstances, there does not exist, at present, any general or widespread distress which would justify the opening of relief works. The Inspector will again visit the district shortly.

Mr. J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that in the Glencolumbkill, Carrick and Kilcar districts of the County Donegal the persons to whom the superintendence of the relief works is entrusted, such as sergeants of police, returning officers, surveyors and engineers have no power to place the names of applicants on the list of persons to be employed on such works, but that the names of applicants for employment must be first sent to Dublin Castle for approval; and (2) whether, having regard to the great hardship, amounting in many instances to privation, that the delay thus necessarily entailed creates, he will give directions that the local superintendents of relief works be empowered to add to the list of employés on these works such persons as they think fit, and that these persons be admitted to employment immediately, pending the ultimate sanction or disapproval of the authorities in Dublin?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The regulations governing the mode of obtaining employment on relief works where opened were settled by Government after careful consideration, and have given satisfaction and entailed no unnecessary delay in their working. At all events, no complaints have so far been made in the matter. The onus of determining who shall be eligible for employment on the works devolves upon the officials of the Local Government Board, and the Executive Government in no way interfere with the selections made by these officials. The request contained in the concluding paragraph is not one with which the Government could comply consistently with the policy laid down by them in the matter of relief operations.

MR. MACNEILL asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that under the present system men were kept out of employment for three or four days while Dublin was being communicated with. Might these men not have immediate relief pending the sanction of Dublin Castle?

MR. J. MORLEY said, the men were not kept out of work; but, even if they were, there was no risk, like dying of starvation. There was the ordinary Poor Law.

MR. J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he has received a copy of the resolutions passed on Wednesday 6th March at a meeting of the people of the parish of Killybegs, over which the Rev. M. Martin, parish priest of Killybegs, presided, urging on him the necessity of introducing public works such as the making of new roads and the repairing of old ones, and the construction of the long-promised pier; (2) whether he is aware that the chairman stated that nearly every day some of his parishioners came to him to ask for a few shillings for the purchase of Indian meal, and publicly called on the Chief Secretary to save his people from starvation by instituting works of a useful and permanent character; (3) when has a Local Government Board Inspector visited and reported on the state of this district, and what is the date of the last previous visit and report of such Inspector; and may his reports be produced; and (4) whether, having regard to the fact that persons with local knowledge absolutely contradict the official information that there is no abnormal distress in this locality, he will cause an independent inquiry to be made, having regard to the positive statement that the people of this district are threatened with death from starvation?

MR. J. MORLEY: A newspaper report of the proceedings referred to in the first and second paragraphs has been brought under my notice. The Inspector visited Killybegs on the 20th February, and will be there again to-morrow, when he will report fully on the condition of the people. It would be contrary to practice to make public the Inspector's reports in matters of this kind, which are regarded as confidential.

MR. J. ROCHE (Galway): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been directed to a resolution recently passed by the Glenamaddy Poor Law Board, calling on the Government to open much needed relief works in the district, such as drainage, making new roads or repairing old ones, as much distress prevails, and, if some employment be not given to the people, the guardians are confident that they will severely suffer; whether the Government are prepared to have the whole of the union scheduled as distressed; and what steps will be taken to cope with the existing state of affairs.

MR. J. MORLEY: I have seen the resolution referred to. The Inspector of the Local Government Board visited this Union on the 12th instant, and, as a result of his inquiries, reports that no abnormal destitution exists there at the present time. The failure of the potato crop has not been so severely felt in this union as in other districts, and the Guardians have not considered it necessary to apply for a seed loan. The inspector will again visit the union in a few days, but, upon the information at present before the Local Government Board, there is no such widespread distress in the union as would justify the opening of relief works.

MR. T. CURRAN (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has received a report from the Local Government Board Inspector on the prevalence of distress in the parishes of Coolavin and Curry; whether there is any objection to stating the general purport of such report, and what are the prospects of relief being afforded to these distressed districts?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board's Inspector has recently visited the Coolavin district and inquired into the condition of the people, but was unable to find any signs of widespread distress such as to render necessary the opening of relief works. There are no doubt isolated cases of distress, and the Guardians will be authorised to relax the restrictions on outdoor relief to meet any such cases. As regards the district of Curry, the Inspector is inspecting that locality to-day, and will report without delay the result of his investigation.

Mr. J. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Local Government Board has been directed to the very serious distress existing in the Breandrum Division of the Mohill Union, one of the districts scheduled under the Congested Districts Board in South Leitrim; and whether, as the Congested Districts Board have absolutely refused to carry out any works in that district, although Leitrim is one of the counties specially entitled to the expenditure of the funds placed in their hands under the Irish Reproductive Loan Fund Act and Sea Coast Fisheries Fund Act, he will direct that an Inspector of the Local Government Board again visit the district to have inquiries made as to the extreme distress existing amongst the people, and as to the necessity of providing employment by sinking a number of tributaries to the Elsin river, as suggested by the Mohill Board of Guardians at their last meeting?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board's Inspector has been instructed to again visit the locality referred to in the question and report on its condition.

HALF-TIME SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Sir J. GORST (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that in some of the Poor Law schools children are put to labour as half-timers at nine years of age, and in no school is the age of half-timers fixed higher than 11; and that in some schools the hours of labour of children is as much as 10 and even upwards; and whether, in accordance with the National obligations entered into at the Berlin Conference in 1890, he will issue an order to prohibit the putting to labour of any children under the control of local authorities until they have attained the age of 12 years, and to limit their hours of labour to those prescribed at that Conference?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. G. J. Shaw-Lefevre, Bradford, Central): My attention has not been called to the fact that any children in the Poor Law schools have been put to labour before the age of 11. There is, I believe, some evidence to that effect before the Committee on these schools, of which the right hon. Gentleman is a Member; but it appears that in such cases the industrial work to which the children are put is of a domestic character very similar to that which would often be done by a child at home before or after school hours, and very different from work in factories. I propose, however, to issue an Order prohibiting the employment of children as half-timers below the age of 11. With respect to employment of children as half-timers between the ages of 11 and 12, I shall await the decision of the House on the Motion which I understand the right hon. Gentleman proposes to make in connection with the Factories Bill, to raise the limit of prohibition to the age of 12.

DISORDERLY HOUSES.

*Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the Report on the state of crime in Liverpool recently issued by the Watch Committee, wherein the head constable states that, with regard to proceedings against owners and agents of disorderly houses, he has in no way modified the opinion he had formerly expressed, that the present law is utterly inadequate to meet the purpose for which it would appear to be intended; whether his attention has been further drawn to the statement therein, that while there were 677 convictions during the past year in Liverpool for keeping brothels, in 13 cases only did their appear to be even *prima facie* evidence against the owners or agents of these houses of an offence against the letter of the present law, which, when tried, resulted in only two convictions, both being against the same woman; and whether he is now prepared, on behalf of the Government, to propose legislation to remedy the existing deficiencies in the law?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. Asquith, Fife, E.): Under the existing law the liability of the owner is confined to cases where he knowingly lets the premises to be used as a brothel, or is wilfully a party to their continued use for that purpose. This appears to me to be as far as the law can reasonably go. The defect, as I understand, complained of is the difficulty of proving guilty knowledge or wilful connivance on the part of the owner. Various suggestions have been made for shifting the onus of proof, but none of them seem to me to be satisfactory. I am disposed to think that the conviction of a tenant should be deemed sufficient to put the landlord on inquiry, and that he should be held responsible if the premises continue to be used by the same tenant for the same purpose. But from the inquiries which I have made the difficulty which has arisen in Liverpool does not appear to have been experienced generally, and though the matter will continue to receive consideration the Government are not at present prepared to propose legislation. I shall, however, be very glad to receive any suggestions which my hon. Friend or any other Member of the House may desire to make on the subject.

THE EDUCATION GRANTS.

Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will consider the possibility of making some quarterly payment on account of the annual Parliamentary grant due to public elementary schools?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. Acland, York, W.R., Rotherham): The difficulty in making any payments on account of the annual grants is that it cannot be known till after the annual inspection has been held and the forms for the year filled up by the local managers whether the conditions requisite for the grant have been fulfilled. If an advance payment were made and it turned out at the end of the year that no grant had been due, the State would lose the amount of the advance. I should add that the annual grant is in this way on a different footing from the fee grant, which is earned by the mere fact of the school remaining recognised, and of which instalments can, therefore, be paid.

THE WEIGHING OF CATTLE.

Mr. W. JACKS (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he has received a petition signed by many farmers and graziers in Stirlingshire and other parts of the United Kingdom, requesting the Board to issue a set of Rules for the guidance of market authorities and auctioneers, indicating the sort of weighing apparatus which will be considered sufficient and suitable under Section 2 of the Weighing of Cattle Act, 1891, and also making certain suggestions as to requirements which should be insisted on in such Rules regarding size and decription of apparatus and the necessity of its being stamped in accordance with the Board of Trade Regulations; and whether the Board of Agriculture is prepared to adopt any of the suggestions so made?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Herbert C. Gardner, Essex, Saffron Walden): I have received the petition to which my hon. Friend refers, and it has received my careful consideration. I do not think it would be desirable or practicable to issue a set of hard and fast rules, which would be applicable to all the various circumstances under which weighing machines are erected; but I have prepared a general memorandum on the subject, for the guidance of those by whom weighing accommodation has to be provided, which will, I think, be of service. It will be ready in the course of a few days, and I shall be glad to supply a copy to my hon. Friend.

Mr. A. BIRRELL (Fife, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture—(1) whether he is aware that many auctioneers have erected at their markets cattle weighbridges fitted with automatic indicating dials, the smallest division of which represents 28 lbs., or one quarter of a hundredweight; (2) whether he is aware that, in many cases, no one is in charge of these machines during the holding of the sale to adjust the balance when this is from time to time required, owing to the accumlation of droppings &c., which sometimes weigh as much as 70 lbs.; and (3) whether the Board of Agriculture consider that auctioneers in these circumstances properly comply with the provisions of the Weighing of Cattle Acts, 1887 and 1891?

MR. HERBERT GARDNER: It is, the case that in some instances weighbridges have been erected with dials such as those to which my hon. Friend refers. Opinion on the subject of such machines is very divided, and I cannot say generally that they fail to comply with the requirements of the Acts. I should, however, be very willing to make inquiry as to the machines provided in particular instances, and to ascertain, and as far as possible give effect to, the wishes of the farmers and others by whom they are used. With reference to the second paragraph of the question, I would say that both market authorities and auctioneers are required by law to appoint proper persons to have charge of the machines, and if they fail to do so, an offence is committed which might be made the subject of legal proceedings.

SCOTCH LEGISLATION.

MR. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, looking to the limited time likely to be available for Scotch Legislation this Session, he will delay the introduction of the Local Government (Scotland) Bill until after the Crofters Bill promised in the Queen's Speech, and the Bill dealing with the recommendations of the Select Committee on Feus and Leases, and also enabling local authorities in Scotland to acquire land for the erection of workmen's dwellings, shall have been introduced; and whether he will give the two latter Bills precedence as regards the future stages over the Local Government (Scotland) Bill?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Bills relating to Scotland which the Government have prepared will be brought in at the time most convenient. The Government will be careful to do nothing which can prejudice the prospects of the Crofter's Bill.

TRADE UNIONS IN THE COLONIES.

MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that trade unions, like the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, have branches in British Colonies and Possessions, and that by reason of inability to register in the Colonies they are under a disability as regards the investment of their funds, the banks refusing to accept the corporate name of the society or its trustees; and whether he will endeavour to arrange with the Colonial Office for such an Amendment of the law as will secure to these branches of a lawfully registered trade union similar rights and privileges enjoyed in this country?

MR. H. H. ASQUITH: Where trade unions have branches in the Colonies, such branches must, of course, conform to colonial law, whatever it may be; and in self-governing colonies the alteration of the laws rests entirely with the colonial Legislatures. I have consulted my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies with regard to the particular difficulty referred to in the question, and he points out that as regards the Australian colonies the difficulty would apparently be met if the union were to arrange for the funds of the colonial branches being invested in Court trustees.

THE NEW ZEALAND POST OFFICE AND TRADES UNIONS.

MR. HOWELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the Post Office authorities at Dunedin, in New Zealand, refuse to accept money as investment in the Post Office Savings Banks belonging to the Trades Unions registered in this country, either in the corporate name of the Union or in the names of the trustees; and whether he can arrange with the Colonial Office to afford to the branches of Trades Unions in the Colonies the same rights and privileges as regards the Post Office Savings Banks as they enjoy, and have long enjoyed, in this country?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The New Zealand Post Office being quite independent of the British Post Office, I have no information as to the matter to which the hon. Member refers, but it appears to be one for the consideration of the Colonial Legislatures.

BRITISH AND INDIAN CURRENCY.

MR. HOWELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that the Amalgamated Society of Engineers have branches of that union in British India; whether he is aware that the society periodically equalises its funds, and, that, in so equalising the funds of the union, in the transmission from Bombay of the sum required, £153, to the Greenonk branch, there was a loss by exchange of £73 19s. 5½d., or within £5 0s. 1d. of one-half the total; and whether anything can be done so to adjust the currency of British India and the United Kingdom as to prevent such losses?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): There is no information in the India Office as to the matter to which my hon. Friend's question refers; but it is unfortunately true that losses upon remittances from India have occurred and do occur, and no measures for preventing them have hitherto been found practicable.

BEAM TRAWLING.

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Scotch Fishery Board have any means of ascertaining whether, since the introduction of beam trawling, the supply of fish to the Scotch markets has appreciably increased, and if the price to the consumer is, speaking generally any less, now than formerly?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: The Fishery Board have no means of ascertaining the quantity of fish supplied to the Scottish markets; but from the statistics in their possession showing the quantity landed in Scottish Ports from 1884 to 1894, both inclusive, it is seen that the catch, while it has fluctuated considerably, has been very similar in 1884 and 1885, 1893 and 1894. The Fishery Board cannot supply information as to the price paid for fish by consumers, the only prices given in the Board's Returns being those obtained by the fishermen. But I may add that some general inquiries are being made by the Fishery Board into the retail prices at different periods, including, of course, the present time.

DRIVERS' AND CONDUCTORS' LICENSES.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, seeing that great inconvenience, and frequently the loss of a day's wage, is entailed upon the drivers and conductors of omnibuses and tramcars throughout the Metropolis owing to their ignorance of the fact that it is not necessary for them to attend at New Scotland Yard in order to obtain a renewed licence, but that this can be obtained at the police station nearest to the address of the licensee, he will take steps to have this information brought to their notice by means of circular or otherwise, in accordance with the promise he made last session in reply to a question similar to this?

MR. ASQUITH: Arrangements are now nearly completed by which the Commissioner of Police will be able to bring the information to the notice of the drivers and conductors, that they can apply for a renewal of their licence at the nearest police station.

ADMIRALTY DEPARTMENT.

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Treasury has yet received from the Admiralty the normal clerical establishments of all its various departments, fixed in accordance with the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, and called for by Treasury Minute of 10th August, 1889; and, if not, whether he will call upon the Admiralty to carry out the recommendation of the Commission without further delay?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): As I stated in my reply to the hon. Member for West Limerick on the 7th inst., the normal clerical establishment of the Accountant General's Department has been fixed, and it is expected that a settlement of the other Admiralty Departments will shortly be effected.

SLIGO POST OFFICE.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he proposes to remove the Sligo Post Office to new premises; and, will he, before finally deciding as to the new site, communicate his intentions to the Sligo Municipal Council, and give that body an opportunity of laying their views before him?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: Inquiries are being made for premises or a site for a new post office at Sligo, and the District

Surveyor has been instructed to communicate with the Municipal Council when suitable premises or a site have been found.

OLD ABBEY BURIAL GROUND, SLIGO.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) is he aware that the Local Government Board for Ireland have issued a sealed Order, closing the Old Abbey Burial Ground, Sligo, against further interments; (2) by what authority has the Board taken this action; (3) is he aware that a strong feeling prevails amongst certain classes in Sligo against the Order; and (4) how does the Local Government Board propose to carry their Order into effect in the event of the Urban Sanitary Authority refusing to obey it.

MR. J. MORLEY: The reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative, and I have also received a protest to the effect mentioned in the third paragraph. The Order was issued in pursuance to the powers vested in the Local Government Board by Section 162 of the Public Health Act of 1878, after the Board had satisfied itself, by careful inquiry, that, owing to the overcrowded and unsanitary condition of the ground, further burials therein would be detrimental to the public health. In reply to the last paragraph, I am advised that under Section 167 of the Act referred to, persons burying in the closed ground in violation of the Order are liable to a penalty of £10. In the event of an infringement of the Order, the penalty would be sued for and inflicted.

LONDON AND PROVINCIAL RATES.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether, as the Treasury contributions in aid of the London rates are 1¾d. in the £, and those of provincial boroughs are 4¾d., and those of counties are 3¾d. in the £, respectively, the Government will take any steps to further equalise these grants in aid.

MR. G. J. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I will answer this question. I have been quite unable to verify the facts stated by the hon. member. The share of London in the sums paid into the Local Taxation Account was, in 1893-94 £1,132,000, equal to 8d. in the £1 on the ratable value. The share of county boroughs was 9·8d. in the £, and that of administrative counties was 9½d. in the £. The distribution was in strict accordance with the arrangements made by the late Government.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked, when it was expected that the Committee would be appointed, as promised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Budget Debate last year, to consider the distribution of the probate duty and licences as between London and the rest of the country.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, he should communicate with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this point.

RAILWAY EXTENSION IN IRELAND.

MR. T. CURRAN (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to the resolution of the Grand Jury of Sligo, urging the construction of a railway connection between Ballyodare and Ballina, Sligo and Bundoran, and Sligo and Arignagh; and, whether the Government will take the necessary steps to give effect to the resolution.

MR. J. MORLEY: The resolution referred to has been received by me. I am informed, however, that the funds assigned to railway extension in Ireland are exhausted.

OWENMORE DRAINAGE SCHEME, SLIGO.

MR. T. CURRAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has received a resolution of the Grand Jury of Sligo requesting that funds be provided for the carrying out of the Owenmore Drainage Scheme; and, whether it is intended to comply with the request.

MR. J. MORLEY: I have received a copy of the resolution in question, and am informed by the Board of Works that works of this class cannot be undertaken unless the steps required by the Drainage Acts have been taken by the owners and occupiers directly interested.

THE MAGAZINE RIFLE.

SIR HENRY FLETCHER (Sussex, Lewes): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state how many battalions of the Regular Army armed with the magazine rifle will be unable to go through their musketry course with that rifle owing to the scarcity of ranges; and, in the event of their not being able to fire with the weapon with which they are armed, what course will he adopt?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): It is anticipated that all battalions of the Regular Army armed with the Lee-Metford rifle will this year be able to fire their course with that arm.

MR. TOMLINSON: Will that include the Militia?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No, Sir; I said the Regular Army, which does not include the Militia.

RELIEF WORKS IN IRELAND.

MR. J. TULLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what are the terms of the appointments of the temporary inspectors under the Local Government Board on whose reports relief works are granted or withheld in the west of Ireland; how many of these gentlemen have had any previous connection with the Poor Law service; and what is the nature of their previous experience, if any, in the administration of relief in the distressed districts of Ireland?

MR. J. MORLEY: The terms of appointment of the three temporary Local Government Board Inspectors are at the rate of £300 a year with travelling and subsistence allowances. One of these gentlemen has acted on a former occasion in a similar capacity, and another has had many years' experience in the Poor Law medical service. The districts in which the worst effects of the potato failure have been manifested are in charge, however, of five of the Board's permanent Inspectors, each of whom was engaged in the corresponding relief measures of 1890–1.

ROAD CONTRACTORS IN IRELAND.

MR. P. McGILLIGAN (Fermanagh, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the resolution of the Fermanagh Grand Jury with regard to the report of the county surveyor as to the dislocation of the county business that will be created by the recent decision of the Court of Appeal affecting payments for road maintenance contractors; and, whether the Government will consider the advisability of bringing in or give facilities for the passing of a short non-contentious Bill, providing that where neither the grand juries nor the road contractors dissent the present road maintenance contracts, instead of running from assize to assize, shall run from 1st May or 1st November, so that contractors who had a half-year's work done in November shall be paid at the following Spring Assizes, and contractors who had half a year's work done in May shall be paid at the ensuing Summer Assizes?

MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. Member does not appear to be aware that a Bill dealing with this subject has already passed through this House. I am advised that this Bill, if it becomes law, will obviate the inconvenience mentioned.

GUIANA BOUNDARIES.

MR. W. P. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government has at any time received proposals to settle the question of the disputed frontier between Venezuela and the British Colony of British Guiana by arbitration; whether, since gold was discovered in the debatable territory, the dispute has grown more acute, and the position of affairs become such that serious difficulties are threatened; whether proposals of arbitration have been declined, and, if so, on what grounds; and, whether Her Majesty's Government would now entertain or initiate fresh proposals of arbitration?

SIR EDWARD GREY: Her Majesty's Government have received suggestions from various quarters with a view of settling the question of the disputed frontier. We have no information tending to confirm the suggestion of the second part of the question. Her Majesty's Government cannot agree to submit to arbitration the question of their right to territory long settled and governed as part of a British Colony, and must continue to decline any proposal based upon such a ground. They are, however, willing to submit to arbitration the question of certain territory beyond the Schomburgh line, and the Venezuelan Government have more than once been so informed.

Mr. BYLES: Will any correspondence be laid on the Table?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I do not think so at the present moment; but I will consider the point.

VOLUNTEER CAMP CANTEENS.

Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the question of the legality of regimental canteens in Volunteer camps is still *sub judice*, or whether the War Office have acted on the opinion of the solicitor to the Department—that nothing will be gained by applying for a special case in the matter of the canteen of the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment; and whether, in view of the doubt cast upon the legality of Volunteer canteens worked strictly on the regimental system, he will reconsider the suggestion that a clause should be inserted in the Army Act of this Session, defining the conditions under which such canteens may be legally worked?

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The case is no longer *sub judice*. It appeared on a re-hearing of the case that the canteen in question had sold liquor to the general public, a course inconsistent with the rules governing regimental canteens. There was, therefore, no necessity for a special case. There is no question of the power of Volunteer Corps to establish canteens on the regimental system; but it is understood that for temporary encampments the system is not suitable, and that, as a rule, licences would be taken out under Section 174 of the Army Act. No amendment of the Act seems to be required.

IRISH POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

Mr. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is the intention of the Cork postal authorities to send learners (unestablished officers) for special duty to Kinsale or other offices in the south of Ireland during the approaching fishing season; and whether, in view of the fact that this class of duty has been satisfactorily performed by members of the Cork established staff, and that the established staff have regarded this change of duty as a privilege from a health point of view, he will state what are the reasons for departing from the established usage?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: I am afraid that I cannot admit that the established staff at Cork have any ground for such a claim as the hon. Member puts forward on their behalf, but generally speaking, there is no intention of disturbing the arrangements which were made last year. In certain cases, however, it may be convenient to get the work done by means of unestablished skilled assistants who are in training for established places in the Department.

THE ARMENIAN COMMISSION.

Mr. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has observed the statement of the special correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* (issue of 11th March) that the Commission at Moush is progressing slowly because of the European delegates' work being got through so tardily, they having no secretary and only one dragoman; and also the statement by the same authority, that the Commission has reached a point where it has to inquire into the deeds of Turkish Generals, and the dragoman is afraid to fulfil his duties; and, if these are facts, will Her Majesty's Government take steps to prevent any interference with the efficiency of the inquiry?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I have seen the statement. In consequence of a representation received on the 6th inst. from the European delegates, steps have been taken to provide them with a dragoman, and to obtain his official recognition by the Turkish Authorities. Her Majesty's Ambassador at the Porte will join with those of the other Powers represented in securing that the delegates shall have every assistance that is necessary for the proper performance of their duties, so that there may be no interference with the efficiency of the inquiry.

Mr. SCHWANN said, he had received a telegram from a trustworthy source to the effect that the Governor of Van was intimidating witnesses. [*Cries of* "Order."] If this was the case, would the Government take means to secure his immediate dismissal?

[No answer was given.]

IRISH ESTATES.

Mr. P. FFRENCH (Wexford S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that the tenants on Lord Templemore's property have offered to purchase their holdings at 18 years' purchase if the landlord will first allow them to go into Court and get a judicial rent fixed, but that Lord Templemore has refused his tenants the usual reduction of 25 per cent., and threatened to distrain if they do not either pay up the full rents or buy at 18 years' purchase of same; and (2) whether he will refuse the forces of the Crown to assist in collecting these claims?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I understand the landlord has refused the offer of the tenants to purchase at 18 years on the valuation. His demand is for 18 years' purchase on the present rental. With respect to the concluding inquiry I can only refer the hon. gentleman to my reply to his similar question regarding the Conlan Estate.

Mr. FFRENCH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that writs have been served on the Tintern Estate for rents and old arrears although tenants have for years back been allowed an abatement of 5s. in the pound. And, whether, as the arrears are from 20 to 40 years due, as the tenants have offered to pay their rents at the usual reduction, and as agricultural depression is greater now than at any previous time, he will refuse the forces of the Crown to the receiver to collect these rents and arrears.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am glad to learn from a telegram received this morning that a settlement was arrived at on this property yesterday.

Mr. FFRENCH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that the tenants on the Conlan estate bid £965 17s. 8d. more than the Norwich Union Insurance Company, to whom the estate was knocked down; that the Company commenced bidding at 14 years' purchase, and bid over the tenants step by step until the tenants bid 17 years' purchase; that the tenants were then told that they could have their holdings for 19 years' purchase, although the Company had not bid 17 years' purchase; that when the Company became the owners of the estate they demanded the full rent and arrears due, including the hanging gale, which had never been called for by the landlord, and which was due for half a century; and that the tenants were not satisfied to pay their rents at 30 per cent. on non-judicial rents and 15 per cent. on judicial rents; (2) whether he is aware that the landlord allowed 22½ and 30 per cent. reductions; and (3) whether, in the face of the present unequalled depression of prices, if the Company do not accept the tenants' offer, namely, the rents at the reduction asked for, or 17 years' purchase of the rental, he will imitate the right honourable gentleman the Member for Bristol, when Chief Secretary for Ireland, by refusing the forces of the Crown to collect the rents?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have no reason to doubt the accuracy, of the statements in the first paragraph, though, as I stated in reply to the hon. Gentleman's previous question of Tuesday last, the Registrar of the Land Judge's Court had informed me no official record was kept of offers which, in such transactions, have not been accepted. As to the second paragraph, I am informed by the police that in former years there was no abatement on judical rents, but from 15 to 20 per cent. on non-judicial rents. As regards the concluding paragraph, I can only express the hope that an amicable arrangement will be brought about between the parties, and legal proceedings in ejectment or otherwise thus obviated. The question of affording protection to the Sheriff or his officers has not yet arisen, but my hon. Friend is doubtless aware that the Executive Government has but one alternative open to it in such cases.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) asked whether, in view of the extraordinary discontent existing in this district over this subject, and in view of the fact that there was likely to be disturbance and possibly a breach of the peace, the right hon. Gentleman would not feel justified in making some representation to the Norwich Insurance Company as to the advisability of allowing those tenants to become owners of their own farms.

Mr. J. MORLEY: It is a very delicate matter for the Executive to interfere in bargains of this kind. At the same time there can be no harm in my representing to the Norwich Insurance Company how the matter really stands.

MR. C. J. DARLING (Deptford) asked whether, now that the right hon. Gentleman had been informed that there was likely to be a breach of the peace, he would see that there were plenty of police in that part of the country.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I disclaim the interpretation put on my acts by the hon. Member when I was Chief Secretary.

MR. W. REDMOND asked the Chief Secretary whether it was not the fact that the right hon. Member for West Bristol, in circumstances somewhat similar to those now under discussion, declared it to be his intention to put on pressure within the law.

No answer was given.

FACTORY WORK.

MR. J. T. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has made inquiries with regard to the number of men working in factories and employed in operations involving continuous work day and night seven days a week: and whether those inquiries are complete; and, if so, whether he will state the general results?

MR. ASQUITH: I have made the inquiry which I promised to make in May last, viz., as to the number of men employed for an average of 12 hours a day, where the work goes on on Sundays as well as on week days. 1,569 are so employed in chemical works, 438 in breweries and distilleries, 5,705 in blast furnaces, iron and steel works, 570 in gas works, 496 in oil works, 1,055 in miscellaneous works, total 9,833; but that that the Chief Inspector states that these figures are defective, partly from the difficulty of ascertaining where men are so employed, and partly from the failure of some manufacturers to give the numbers they employ.

In answer to a further question by MR. BRUNNER,

MR. ASQUITH said the Home Office had no compulsory powers to compel manufacturers to give particulars.

THE FOREST FLY.

Mr. A. M. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, with reference to the proposed manœuvres in the New Forest, the authorities are aware of the prevalence of an insect called "Forest Fly," which is extremely irritating to horses; and whether he has observed that the records of the Blandford Autumn Manœuvres of 1872 confirm the view that it is undesirable to picket out large numbers of horses in any district where the "Forest Fly" prevails.

*Mr. CAMPBELL BANNERMAN: The records of the Blandford Manœuvres of 1872 do not refer to the "Forest Fly." I have caused inquiries to be made on the subject, and it is reported that, subject to proper precautions being adopted, the prevalence of the fly is not a sufficient reason for manœuvres not taking place in the New Forest.

MOBILISATION OF THE ARMY RESERVE.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, with reference to the proposed mobilisation of a portion of the Home Army, he has considered the expediency of introducing a short Act giving the authorities the necessary powers for calling out the requisite number of men from the Army Reserve; whether, if these men are merely invited to come out, he has any reason to suppose that the best men will see any sufficient inducement to respond to the call; and what steps, if any, will be taken to ascertain the attitude likely to be taken by civilian employers of Army Reserve men with respect to the proposed experiment.

*Mr. CAMPBELL BANNERMAN: No Act is required for the purpose indicated, as under the Reserve Forces Act of 1882 the Government has already power to call out men of the Army Reserve for 12 days' training. It is probable that in case of an invitation to the men to come up voluntarily, those would most readily respond who are out of work; and these would not be the best class. The question of the steps which can most prudently be taken for this partial mobilisation is now being considered.

BREACH OF CONTRACT AT A WELSH COLLIERY.

MR. W. PRITCHARD MORGAN (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the

Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the conviction by the stipendiary magistrate at Merthyr Tydvil, on the 4th instant, of 21 hauliers, each of whom was fined £2 3s. for an alleged breach of contract, namely, refusing to work; whether he is aware that the evidence disclosed the fact that the alleged offence consisted solely of a refusal to take horses to their work on the ground that the employers had not supplied the hauliers with the necessary and usual corn for the feed of such horses; and that four other hauliers in the same employ, and on the same occasion, who were supplied with corn, took their horses to work as usual; is he aware that very many hauliers in similar employment in the same county have lately been convicted of cruelty to animals, they having driven their horses without having been previously provided with the necessary and usual corn; is he aware that the attention of the stipendiary magistrate was called by counsel for the defendants to the fact that, if the defendants had taken their horses to work without food, they would have been liable to conviction for cruelty to animals; and that the stipendiary magistrate refused to state a case for appeal to the High Court; and whether he will, under the circumstances, remit the fine?

Mr. ASQUITH: The accuracy, or at least the fullness, of the statements in the question seems to be disputed. I am informed that the food for the horses had been sent, in the first instance, to the wrong stable, and arrived at the moment when the men had ascended the pit. The result of their failure to work was that 250 colliers were left idle for the day. The proceedings were, as I understand, for damages under the Employers and Workmen's Act, 1875, sec. 4 of which gives a court of summary jurisdiction the civil jurisdiction to assess damages for breach of contract. It is not, therefore, a case in which the Secretary of State has any power to interfere.

SUICIDES.

Admiral FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will lay upon the Table copy of Circular issued recently to coroners relative to verdicts of juries at coroners' inquests in cases of suicides; whether he will look into the verdict of *felo de se*, reported in papers of 27th February, returned at a coroner's inquest held at Hemel Hampstead on a police constable who died by his own hand, which verdict is alleged to have been given in consequence of the Circular in question; whether he is aware that in consequence of such verdict the widow with 10 children is deprived of the constable's payment of 17 years' contribution to the Superannuation Fund which she would have received if an ordinary verdict of temporary insanity had been given; and whether he will inquire and see if the payments in question can be given to the widow under the circumstances?

Mr. ASQUITH: No such Circular as that referred to by the hon. Member has been issued by the Home Office to coroners. In the form under which the coroners make their returns for statistical purposes, there are two columns under the head "Suicide"—one for cases of self-destruction due to insanity, and the other for cases of *felo de se*. Where there is no evidence as to the state of mind of the deceased, the death is directed to be entered in the first class. I am not aware that anything in the Police Act, 1890, prevents a Police Authority granting gratuities to the widow and children of a police constable guilty of *felo de se*, and I am informed by the Chief Constable of Herts that the Superintendent was in error in informing the coroner's jury that the constable's family were debarred from receiving any gratuity under the Police Act. The matter rests with the Standing Joint Committee, to whom it will be referred at their next meeting.

DUKE OF YORK'S MILITARY SCHOOL.

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the production of a certificate of baptism is required as a condition of admission to the Duke of York's School; and whether he is aware that the children of Baptists are thereby excluded; whether religious teaching in the school is provided only for the Church of England, Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, no other religious bodies being recognised by the

War Office; and whether, in view of the fact that the Duke of York's Military School is maintained by a Parliamentary grant, and governed by a Board of Her Majesty's Commissioners, it is in the power of the Commissioners to frame regulations of a less restrictive character?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: As boys in the Duke of York's School must be brought up in the religion in which they enter, the baptismal certificate is called for as evidence on the point, and not as a condition of admission; and I do not for a moment believe that the Commissioners would exclude a boy, otherwise qualified, because he was a Baptist. Religious instruction in the School is provided under four denominations, Wesleyan being additional to those named in the question. Probably, if there was a Baptist boy in the School, special arrangements could be made for his receiving instruction from a minister of his denomination; but there would be difficulty in further subdividing the regular religious training of the School.

THE INDIAN PRESS.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government of the North West Provinces and Oudh subscribes for 62 copies of the *Panjab Patriot*, a newspaper published outside these provinces; and, if so, why this expense is incurred out of provincial revenues; and whether the same government has established a monopoly of printing judicial forms in favour of the "Newal Kishore" Press; and, if so, for what reason?

SIR EDWARD GREY: Similar questions were asked in the Council of the Lieutenant Governor on the 21st January last, and the Secretary of State has nothing to add to the answers there given as reported in the *North West Provinces and Oudh Gazette* for 26th January, 1895.

THE WAZIRI TERRITORY.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether there is any intention of moving the garrisons now at Dera Ghazi Khan and other neighbouring frontier stations into the Waziri territory beyond the Suleiman Range?

SIR EDWARD GREY: Some redistribution of garrisons on the North Western Frontier will no doubt be necessary, but the Secretary of State has reason to think that the Government of India have not yet finally decided on the course which they will recommend.

SCOTCH AND IRISH CATTLE REGULATIONS.

MR. J. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that it is much more difficult under present regulations to export cattle and sheep from Scotland to Ireland than from Ireland to Scotland; that in the former case an agent has to be employed in Dublin to apply at the Castle for permission; that a declaration has to be signed, a veterinary surgeon's certificate obtained, and other forms gone through, involving delay and expense, notwithstanding that Scotland has a clean bill of health; whereas in the latter case the sole form gone through consists of a hurried inspection by the Government veterinary surgeon while the animals are being shipped; and whether any sufficient reasons exist for the great difference of procedure in the two cases; and, if not, whether the Government will take steps to place the Scottish and Irish exporters on an equal footing?

*MR. HERBERT GARDNER: I understand that the regulations with regard to the importation of cattle and sheep from Great Britain into Ireland are substantially those stated by my hon. Friend. Having regard to the different circumstances which exist, I cannot say that they seem to me in excess of the requirements of the case, but I should be happy to communicate with the Irish Authorities and to endeavour to obtain for Scottish exporters as full facilities as possible consistent with the maintenance of the present satisfactory position of Ireland with regard to the health of cattle and sheep.

VENEZUELA.

MR. A. CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her

Majesty's Government are now represented at Caracas with the Republic of Venezuela; and, if so, what steps, if any, are being taken to bring about a *modus vivendi* for the settlement of disputes now pending?

SIR EDWARD GREY: Her Majesty's Government have no diplomatic representative in Venezuela, but British interests in that country are in charge of the German Representative at Caracas. Her Majesty's Government are, and always have been, ready to come to an amicable arrangement with the Venezuelan Government for the settlement of pending disputes, and their views on the subject were communicated to that Government in 1890 and again in 1893, to the latter of which communications no answer has been returned. Her Majesty's Government must therefore maintain the provisional boundary proclaimed in October, 1886. This boundary does not embrace their whole claim, and the Venezuelan Government have more than once been informed that Her Majesty's Government are willing to submit the right to certain territory outside this boundary to arbitration.

MR. A. CROSS: Can the hon. Baronet say whether, as the German Representative has left Caracas, British interests in Venezuela are receiving protection at the hands of any other representative man?

SIR E. GREY: I am informed that the German Charge d'Affaires is still there.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER asked whether it was a fact that the British flag had been pulled down by Venezuelan troops in British Honduras.

SIR E. GREY asked for notice of the question.

THE WELSH DISESTABLISHMENT BILL.

SIR M. E. HICKS BEACH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department—(1) whether the words in the Twelfth Clause of the Established Church (Wales) Bill, providing for appeals against any decision of the Welsh Commissioners on certain points, are intended to give a right of appeal in all the cases in which it was given by the Forty-second Section of the Irish Church Act; and, if not, whether he will explain the difference, and the reason for it: and (2) whether, by Clause 28 of the Bill it is intended that the Representative Body of the Church in Wales shall be charged with the payment of stamp duty on the conveyance to them by the Welsh Commissioners of the churches, parsonages, or private benefactions which are now, and according to the Bill would still remain, the property of the Church?

MR. ASQUITH: The answer to the first question is in the affirmative. Clause 12 of the Bill has a somewhat wider scope than the Arbitration Section (Section 42) of the Irish Church Act, and therefore is drawn in more general terms. It would give a right of appeal not only on questions of compensation arising under Clauses 17, 18, and 19, but also on questions as to what constitutes a private benefaction within the meaning of Clause 5, and what amount is payable in satisfaction of any existing interest in tithe rent-charge under Clause 16. The answer to the second question is that Clause 28 of the Bill corresponds to Section 35 of the Irish Church Act; and I am informed that the Commissioners of Irish Temporalities conveyed 1,628 churches, with school-houses, lands, and burial grounds, to the representative body in Ireland by a single vesting order, on which one stamp duty of the nominal amount of 10s. was paid. It is not intended that *ad valorem* duty should be paid on any part of the property which is to be transferred by the Commissioners to the Representative Body in Wales, and I will consider the question of amending the language of Clause 28 so as to make this clear.

JABEZ BALFOUR.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether the police Inspector sent out to Argentine in pursuit of Mr. Jabez Balfour (now and for more than a year past at Salta, some 2,000 miles from Buenos Ayres) has ever been at or near Salta, or whether he has remained at Buenos Ayres; and, if so, for what purpose he has remained there; whether he will explain why Her Majesty's Consul at Buenos Ayres has been absent from his post at Buenos Ayres for a whole year, leaving his work to be done by a Vice Consul, and has been during that time at Salta, and for what purpose he has been there; and whether any extra remuneration has been given (and, if so, how much in each case) to the Consul or the Vice Consul respectively for the additional work done by them?

SIR EDWARD GREY: It is usual in Extradition cases to send out a police officer to convey the prisoner to England. As was stated the other day, this was the duty intrusted to the Police Inspector who was sent to the Argentine Republic. The first Inspector who was sent remained at Buenos Ayres to be ready to perform this duty, and the one who has taken his place is there now for the same purpose. The Consul was sent to Salta to watch the Extradition proceedings, which took place in the Salta Court, from which Court there was an appeal to the Supreme Court at Buenos Ayres. No additional remuneration has been given to either the Consul or Vice Consul, but the expenses of the former were paid.

KILNINAN AND KILMORE.

SIR DONALD MACFARLANE (Argyllshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, if he is aware that the parish of Kilninan and Kilmore is for Parish Council purposes divided into two wards, the burgh of Tobermory, forming one, and that only one polling place has been allotted in Tobermory, distant 26 miles from the furthest point of the other ward, and 22 miles from the majority of the voters; and whether, to prevent practical disfranchisement of the bulk of the voters, he will order a separate polling place in a more central situation?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: I have written to ask how the matter stands, and whether it is possible to make arrangements.

IRISH SEED POTATOES.

MR. J. M. RICHARDSON (Lincoln, Brigg): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the whole of the orders for seed potatoes for Ireland have been given to Scotland, and why some share has not been given to the Trentside district of Lincolnshire, in which part of the county large quantities of the best seed can be obtained?

DR. MACGREGOR: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question, I should like to ask whether, as in respect of other things, the Scottish soil does not produce better potatoes than English soil; and whether Lincolnshire should not be content with the excellent celery of which it has a practical monopoly?

MR. J. MORLEY: The purchase of seed potatoes, and the selection of the varieties most suitable for each district, are matters which rest with the several Boards of Guardians who have applied for loans. Before approving the tenders, the Local Government Board satisfy themselves that the seed has not come from a district affected by disease, or from the neighbourhood of the union about to purchase it. Contracts are entered into by the Guardians after advertisements for tenders have been duly published, and these contracts so far, in the majority of cases, have been for Scotch-grown seed. In a good many instances, north of Ireland potatoes have been taken, and, in one or two cases, English seed has been preferred. No seed appears to have been ordered from Lincolnshire.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA IN LONDON.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether another outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia has occurred in a cowshed in Spitalfields; whether, under the London Cowsheds Pleuro-pneumonia Order of 1895, No. 5,289, Section 15, it would be the duty of the inspector in the Metropolitan Cattle Market, Islington, to stop all cattle being removed from the market should an animal affected with pleuro-pneumonia be discovered there, and whether such being the case, the Board of Agriculture will again set into operation the London Cowsheds Pleuro-pneumonia Order of 1893, No. 5,140, which rendered it necessary to obtain a licence from an inspector, before a cow could be removed from any shed in the Metropolis.

*MR. HERBERT GARDNER: It is, I am sorry to say, the case that pleuro-pneumonia was discovered a few days ago in the carcass of a cow brought from a cowshed in Spitalfields. The usual inquiries have been made, and the contact animals slaughtered, but no further cases of disease have been found. In the event of the discovery of pleuro-pneumonia in the Metropolitan Cattle Market, it would be the duty of the inspector of the local authority to proceed in the manner indicated in the question. I am well aware of the inconvenience which would result, and I trust that the Corporation may be willing to adopt certain suggestions I have recently caused to be made to them with regard to the veterinary inspection of animals at the entrance of the market. Such an arrangement would, in my opinion, be more likely to prevent the necessity of interference with the business of the market than the re-imposition of the Cowsheds Order of 1893.

SANITARY CONDITION OF BARRACKS.

LORD BURGHLEY (Northampton, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether the Royal Engineers possess accurate plans of the drains in the Tower of London, Chelsea Barracks, Wellington Barracks, St. George's Barracks, and Kensington Palace Barracks?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The plans of the drains in the Tower are perfectly accurate; those of the other barracks named are of older date, but are sufficient for all practical purposes.

MR. R. W. HANBURY: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Wycombe Division of Bucks (Viscount Curzon), I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state when the sanitary condition of the Cavalry Barracks at Windsor was last inspected and reported upon; whether he will lay this Report upon the Table of the House; and, whether it is considered that those barracks are now in a proper sanitary condition, and fit for the occupation of Her Majesty's troops?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: A full report is made half-yearly, the last being dated November 12, but reports upon particular items of sanitation are constantly being made. The drainage of the barracks is not satisfactory, but a complete new system is in hand. Such of the work as can be done while the troops are in occupation is being pushed forward, and the remainder will be executed later in the season, when the barracks will be vacated for the purpose. The reports are confidential documents, and I am not prepared to lay them on the Table.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) asked whether the scheme would be carried out by the Royal Engineers.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes, to the best of my belief. Does the hon. and gallant Gentleman mean that it will be carried out by them without proper sanitary advice?

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: No, Sir; I did not suggest that.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That is often alleged.

VOLUNTEER CAPITATION GRANTS.

*SIR EDWARD HILL (Bristol, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, when he asserted that the capitation allowances to the Volunteers were a payment in advance based upon a Return of the previous year, he was aware that in two War Office letters, V. General, No. 7,205, dated the 3rd and 13th February, 1890, the contrary had been definitely stated; and whether, in view of this fact, and its great importance to the Volunteer Service, he will reconsider his decision?

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. W. WOODALL, Hanley): My reply of February 25 was strictly accurate, and there can be no doubt that when the first Capitation Grant was issued in 1863 it was issued as an advance for that year, though the amount was based, as recommended by the Royal Commission, on the experience of 1862, a year in which no such Government grant existed. The expressions in the War Office letters referred to merely meant that the grants to be issued were based upon the Returns of the previous year. We are not prepared for the very large double charge in one year which a change in the existing system would involve.

*SIR E. HILL: Will the hon. Gentleman kindly say whether his answer means that a newly-raised Volunteer corps is not entitled to a Capitation Grant in respect of its first year's service?

*MR. WOODALL: No, Sir; but the newly-raised Volunteer corps would be expected to meet all its own expenses out of its own funds for the first year.

THE SWAZIS.

MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the statement made in the official Report of Sir Evelyn Wood's interview with the Swazi King and Council on September 5th, 1881 (Blue Book, C. 7611, p. 53), that those British subjects who entered the Transvaal after the annexation have certain privileges as regards military services; and whether he can state what those privileges were, and whether they now exist; and, if not, when, and under what circumstances, they were abrogated?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I have seen the statement made by Sir E. Wood. The hon. Gentleman will find if he will refer to Article 28 of the Convention of 1881, and to Article 15 of that of 1884, that those British subjects who established their domicile in the Transvaal between April, 1877, and August 1881, are specially exempt from compulsory military service. This article has never been abrogated, and remains in force.

THE LIGHT RAILWAYS COMMITTEE.

*MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade when the evidence of the Departmental Committee on Light Railways will be issued?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): The Committee to which my hon. Friend refers was not a Departmental Committee, but was appointed by the conference convened to consider the subject of Light Railways. After consultation with my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury, the Chairman of the Committee, I have come to the conclusion that I should hardly be justified in putting the country to the expense of printing and circulating the evidence, which is voluminous.

MR. CHANNING: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will consider the advisability of publishing the important documents with respect to light railways in other countries as separate documents?

MR. BRYCE: Yes, Sir; I will consider that.

THE FINANCE ACT, 1894.

MR. F. TAYLOR (Suffolk, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the Board of Inland Revenue, in cases where owners are occupying their own trade premises, are requiring the amount of reduction allowed from the assessment of Income Tax under Schedule A, by virtue of Section 35 of the Finance Act 1894, to be added to the assessment made upon such persons under Schedule D, thus, as to a section of the taxpayers who are taxed upon their earnings, denying them all benefit of the relief supposed to be granted by the Act, and which relief is in fact allowed to the other owners of property; and, if so, whether it is done upon the instructions of Her Majesty's Government; and whether such was the intention of the Government in framing the Act?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): If the hon. Member will give me the particulars of any case in which he thinks a grievance exists, I shall be happy to examine them. Speaking generally, the course pursued by the Inland Revenue appears to be just. Traders are entitled to an allowance of any sum expended for repairs of trade premises under Schedule D. Since the Act of last year they are charged, not on the full value of their premises, but only on five-sixths of that value under Schedule A. If, after having paid on only five-sixths under Schedule A, an owner-occupier were to deduct, not five-sixths, but the whole annual value from his assessment under Schedule D, he would in fact get the allowance for repairs twice over, and would be paying income-tax on something less than his net profits.

MR. TAYLOR asked whether these requirements could be legally enforced.

*SIR W. HARCOURT: Not only legally, but with right.

MR. S. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked whether this reduction was not made specially to meet cases of repairs; and how, in that event, it could be charged with income-tax at all?

*SIR W. HARCOURT: The great difference is that under Schedule A formerly there was not any allowance for repairs. By the regulation of the last Session an allowance of one-sixth was made. Previously the owners of those premises, under Schedule D, had an allowance for repairs; and it could not be argued that they should receive an allowance under both schedules.

THE BUDGET.

Mr. SEYMOUR KEAY: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, when making the financial arrangements for the year, Her Majesty's Government will consider the advisability of introducing a provision reviving the tax of 4s. in the pound on the true yearly value of the land?

Sir W. HARCOURT: There have been many attempts to induce me to state in advance my proposals for the financial arrangements for next year. They have always been unsuccessful, as this must be.

SEVERE WEATHER AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

Mr. J. F. VESEY KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of inspectors has yet been called to the desirability of leniency in examining schools, owing to the recent severe weather; and, if so, what was the date of the National Board's Circular; and whether he will say what are the objections to including among the rules of the National Board a rule similar to Rule 101 in the English Code, giving to schools where the average attendance has been greatly reduced by the prevalence of an epidemic, or other exceptional cause of the like nature, a special grant making up the loss in the ordinary grant?

Mr. J. MORLEY: No circular of the nature indicated in the first paragraph has been issued to Inspectors of Schools. The difficulty in adopting a Rule for Ireland similar to that in the English Code is that the modes of payment of teachers in the two countries are widely different. In England the payments mainly depend on the average daily attendance of scholars, and are therefore liable to fluctuation. In Ireland, on the other hand, about one-half of the teachers' incomes are in fixed salaries which, under the discretion allowed to the Commissioners, remain unaffected for whatever period the attendance may be injuriously affected by severe weather, epidemics, &c.

SWAZILAND.

Mr. T. H. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.) rose and asked leave of the House to Move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of calling attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, the Convention concluded by Her Majesty with the Government of the South African Republic relative to the affairs of Swaziland, a copy of which had just been laid on the Table.

[The pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. Speaker called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen]

Mr. SPEAKER thereafter called upon—

Mr. COCHRANE, who said, he fully realised the responsibility of the course he was taking in moving the Adjournment, but he knew this was a question of great interest to Members on both sides of the House, and it was a question distinctly urgent, because there was at the moment, on the borders of Swaziland, an army assembled with the purpose of invading that country, and forcing the Swazi nation to accept the terms of a Convention, taking away their independence which had been recognised and guaranteed by this country He asked a question of the Under Secretary for the Colonial Office the other day in reference to the assembling of these troops, and the answer given by the hon. Gentleman was, that he thought there were troops assembled on the borders of Swaziland under General Joubert. But this was a matter the Colonial Office should do more than think about, and there should be full and accurate information. The public Press stated, as a fact, the assembling of this Force, and the position was one of great gravity, demanding the attention of the House. On the one side of the border line was a half-disciplined Army collected from all parts of the Transvaal, and on the other side was a warlike race of native inhabitants who had been our allies for years and had bravely distinguished themselves fighting by the side of British troops. The position was one of momentous importance, for, at any time, this half-disciplined Army of the South African Republic might cross the Border, and at once a war would wage of a character that would be deplored by every member of the House. The brave Swazi people would be fighting for what we recognise as the most important right a nation can cherish—their independence; and, on the other hand, the troops of the Republic would be endeavouring to thrust on these people by the point of the bayonet a foreign constitution in the form of a Convention, against which the Swazis had taken every possible means to protest. The hon. Gentleman thought the troops were there; but the House had a right to learn from the Colonial Office if the forces of the Republic were assembled on the frontier, and for what purpose. It could not be for review purposes or to attract and interest the Natives; no, their business was to force the Convention on the Swazi nation. Had Her Majesty's Government given consent to these proceedings? The Under Secretary for the Colonies, in the Debate upon the Address, said the parties to the Conventions of 1881 and 1884 recognised the Swaziland question as one of mutual concern, and that neither party could interfere forcibly in Swaziland without the consent of the other. Had Her Majesty's Government given consent to this invasion of Swaziland? If so he did not know what word he could use to adequately describe the breach of faith thereby committed towards the tribe to whom Her Majesty's Government had given a pledge to maintain their independence. If they had not given consent, then what steps did Her Majesty's Government propose to take to prevent the South African Republic troops from invading Swaziland? That invasion would be a breach of the Convention under which the Republic possessed self-government. To make the position clear it would be necessary to go back to 1881. In that year a settlement of Transvaal territory took place, and in that settlement Her Majesty's Commissioner guaranteed on and after August 8th, 1881, on behalf of Her Majesty, complete self-government, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty, her heirs, and successors, to the inhabitants of the Transvaal territory. Then followed terms and conditions, reservations and limitations. This agreement, which gave self-government to the South African Republic, at the same time in Article XXIV., recognised the independence of Swaziland and the boundary of Swazi territory. That was perfectly clear. But from somewhere an argument had been hunted up that the Swazis were not parties to this Convention of 1881; but that was but a poor horse to ride off upon. There was no doubt that, as would be found in the Blue Books upon which he founded his remarks, this Convention was explained to the Swazis. On September 5th, 1881, an interview took place between Sir Evelyn Wood and the Swazi King. Mr. Rudolf acted as interpreter, and notes were taken by Major Fraser. Sir Evelyn Wood read and explained the Convention, explained the suzerainty of the Queen, and pointed out that the Convention guaranteed the independence of the Swazi nation and maintained the boundary line. He informed the King that the British Government desired only the good of the Swazi nation, and that their friendship should continue; that the Government trusted the King would rule with justice, and his people prosper. When this statement had been interpreted to the King the latter replied—

> "I thank you for leaving me independent to rule my people, and I will always consider myself your child."

Sir Evelyn Wood said: "We wish you to remain independent and prosperous." Surely that established with absolute clearness the fact that the Convention of 1881 declared the independence of Swaziland. To ride off on any such pretext as that the Swazis were not a party to the Convention might be a stroke of diplomacy of which he had no experience, but he asserted it was not common honesty. The Convention of 1884 contained the same article which he had quoted from the Convention of 1881, and again the independence of the Swazis was fully recognised. In the next Convention—the Convention of 1890—the independence of the Swazis was still more strongly mentioned, for it declared that—

> "no inroad on that independence shall be allowed even with the consent of the Swazi Government"

—he called special attention to these words—

> "and without the consent both of Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the South African Republic."

That Convention was still further strengthened by a letter, dated December 1st, 1892, from Lord Ripon (who had just come into Office) to Sir Henry Loch, in which the Secretary for the Colonies stated that any Treaty or Proclamation with the Swazi nation should, before it came into operation, be submitted for the Queen's approval.

"The Government will further require to be satisfied,"

continued Lord Ripon,

"That the consent of the Swazi nation has been effectively and intelligently given."

It was said by the Government that in all their actions in this matter they were but following in the footsteps of their predecessors in Office. He challenged them to produce from the Blue Book, issued on the question, a single passage in support of that statement. He maintained that the predecessors of the Government in Office would not for one moment have allowed the Convention of 1894 to be carried out. Up to 1893 the Government had shown every desire to deal in perfect fairness with the Swazis. But in 1893 a great change took place, and the Government which professed to be so strongly in favour of self-government all round was willing to take away Home Rule from the Swazi nation. There was a long correspondence between the Home Government and the Ministers of the Transvaal Republic; and Sir Henry Loch was sent out in the June of that year to endeavour to obtain the consent of the Swazis to give away their independence. But that consent could not be got from the Swazis; and nothing showed so strongly their antipathy to Boer rule than the fact that those savages had sent a deputation to England so many miles across the seas to lay their case before Her Majesty. The cruel way in which the natives were treated by many of the Boers was a matter of notoriety to every newspaper reader. The Boer system of apprenticeship was nearly akin to slavery, and was alone sufficient to make the Swazis resist any attempt to place them under Boer domination. There were two courses open to the Government. They could have assumed the responsibility of the government of the country. The Swazis had offered their allegiance to the British Crown; out of 750 Europeans in the country 450 were British; the country was rich in minerals, and the trade was almost entirely in British hands. There was, therefore, every inducement to the Government to take over the administration of the country. But if the Government did not adopt that course, they should have continued in the joint administration. That would at least have given them the power to protect the natives from injustice, but in the course the Government had taken it was impossible that any adequate protection could be given to the natives. He thought there was little doubt that the Swazis would bitterly resent this attempt to force upon them a Government which they had strong reasons to object to; and if there should be a war between the South African Republic and the Swazis, the result would be such as the House would abundantly deplore. He therefore felt justified in bringing this very important matter under the notice of the House.

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said, he did not propose to follow the hon. Gentleman at any great length, especially as the hon. Gentleman had not the courtesy to give him any more notice of his intention to raise the question than by a letter which was only delivered to him during question time. At any rate, he felt that, having regard to the present position of affairs, it would not be consistent with the public interest to go at any length or in any detail into matters. The hon. Gentleman asked for information in reference to the position of the Transvaal Republic to Swaziland at the present moment. The information which the Government had from Sir Henry Loch was to the effect that he believed the carrying out of the Convention of 1894 was taking place on peaceful lines, and was likely to continue to take place on peaceful lines, and that the only thing calculated to disturb that peaceful condition of affairs was the raising at the present time of some of the questions to which the hon. Gentleman had referred in the course of his speech. It was, therefore, simply on the ground of public interest that he declined to discuss the part of the hon. Gentleman's speech which dealt with the action the Government might take in regard to the attitude of the Transvaal and the attitude of Swaziland. Perhaps, however, it would be courteous to the hon. Gentleman to say a few words in regard to the other portion of his speech. During the Debate on the Address he, speaking at considerable length, endeavoured to explain to the House the position, as the Government understood it, in reference to the so-called independence of the Swazis, which the hon. Gentleman also raised on that occasion. He then pointed out to the House that the independence of the Swazis—that was to say, their absolute independence as a nation and their absolute freedom from interference by the British Government or by the Transvaal Republic—had never been recognised by the British Government and had never been conceded by any Convention. The independence that was recognised and the independence that was guaranteed was in this sense—that the two contracting parties, both of which were deeply interested in the future of the country, agreed that they would mutually arrange from interference in that country without the consent of the other. That was the independence that was intended in 1881; that was the independence which was continued in 1884, and that was the independence that was further agreed to in 1890. He would like to know from the hon. Gentleman himself what he meant exactly by the independence of the Swazis which the Government had in any way encroached upon. This should be remembered that—assuming the independence of the Swazis had been guaranteed, as the hon. Member said, but which the Government did not at all believe to be the case—the position had gradually and absolutely altered since that time. During the last 10 years the two Powers had encroached on this independence, and the right of interference of the two Powers in the affairs of Swaziland had become so great that, even if the independence of the Swazis had been guaranteed in 1881, at all events it had not been we who had interfered with or broken that independence; that independence had disappeared by the proper joint action of the Transvaal and England. He must point out that if independence had been guaranted, and even if those encroachments had not been made by Great Britain and the Transvaal, the Swazis themselves had practically, by the concessions and agreements made by their late King, given away all that was valuable in their own independence; and, therefore, it was not the fact that you could say that at the present time or years ago the Swazis had any real independence as a nation, so that they retained any powers or administrative rights which they could exercise over their own country.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Who has had it in Swaziland since 1889, besides the Swazis?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Had what?

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Who, but the Swazis themselves, have had the administration of Swaziland?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON said, he had endeavoured to point out to the hon. Gentleman behind him that the Transvaal and the British Government, in different conventions, and especially under the Convention of 1890, which was entered into by the late Government, had practically taken away almost entirely the administration of Swaziland, and to that extent independence had practically disappeared. Therefore, in the first place, he denied that the independence of Swaziland was ever guaranteed to the Swazis; secondly, he said that, even if it had been guaranteed, successive British Governments had so far encroached on that independence that it had practically disappeared; and, thirdly, even if that had not taken place their independence had been given away by the Swazis themselves. The hon. Member asked why the Government carried out the Conventions of 1893 and 1894, and in reply he had endeavoured to explain the historic aspect of the matter. When the present Government came into Office they did not wantonly raise this question. They found the position such that they were bound to come to terms with the Transvaal in consequence of promises made by previous successive Governments. Taking the matter as it then stood, the Government did what they believed to be the best for the Swazis themselves. The only British interests in that part of the country, taking into account the interests the Transvaal Government had acquired, were the interests of the Natives. Those interests the Government had greatly at heart; those interests they had endeavoured to protect; and he believed the only alternative they had before them was the alternative they had accepted and had carried through. The hon. Gentleman behind him said there was no guarantee that the Convention would be properly carried out.

MR. COCHRANE: No sufficient guarantee.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said, he believed they had reserved to the Swazis all those powers, all that independence which they themselves had not given away; and the Government believed that under this Convention they would be undoubtedly secure in that independence and in the exercise of those powers. They had taken means, by the appointment of a British Consul in Swaziland, to observe the action of the Transvaal Government, to see that the Convention was properly carried out. Under that Convention they had retained to the Swazis their native rights and tribal independence, and had secured to them the land and agricultural rights in their possession. They had appointed a Consul to see that this Convention was properly carried out, although he was bound to say that Her Majesty's Government had no reason to believe that the South African Republic did not intend to carry out the Convention in the spirit and in the letter. [Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: "Oh!"] The Government believed, taking the position as they found it, taking into account the action of the British Government and of the Transvaal Government, and taking into account what the Swazis themselves had done, that they had done their best to preserve those rights of the Swazis which still remained; they are not ashamed of the Convention, and they believed it, on the whole, to be the best they could have done for the Swazis.

SIR J. E. GORST (Cambridge University) said, the hon. Gentleman had made it exceedingly difficult for anyone to take part in the Debate, because he had remarked that discussion might interfere with the peaceable settlement of the affairs of Swaziland. Therefore, he would address himself to the question with that warning in his mind, and he would say nothing that would increase the difficulty of the Government or of the High Commissioner in South Africa in their endeavours to maintain the peace in Swaziland. It did not appear that either this or a former discussion had enabled the Government to realise the expectations which the Swazis entertained of the protection to which they were entitled from the British Government. It must be remembered that in 1881, when the Transvaal State was revived after the Transvaal War, the resuscitation of that power caused great alarm to the native tribes round the Transvaal territory. We took every precaution we could to prevent the interference of the Transvaal State with the surrounding native tribes. By the first article of the Convention, the Government of the Transvaal State undertook strictly to adhere to defined boundaries and to prevent any of its inhabitants from encroaching on the land beyond the frontier. That was what was called a guarantee, and it had proved to be wholly inoperative. The moment after that Convention was signed the inhabitants of the Transvaal began to encroach upon the natives all round the Transvaal. This House would remember that it often interfered on behalf of the natives to the west of the Transvaal; but there was no State near the Transvaal which had more reason to fear the new Boer Government than the Swazis had, because they had assembled in arms to assist Great Britain in the Transvaal war. Sir E. Wood thought it necessary to go down and see these Swazis, and in a dispatch which he sent home he said his object was to reassure the King as to his position in relation to the Government of the Transvaal State, to point out to him that in the frontier agreed upon as the boundary of that State his independence had been fully recognised, to satisfy him that interests had been carefully guarded by the Convention, and to indicate to him the line of conduct he was to adopt. Sir E. Wood went down with this object, which he stated to be his main object; he held with the Swazi King the conversation which had been quoted; and the Under Secretary did not appear to attach to it anything like the importance he ought to do. It must be admitted that the Swazis had a strong claim to our protection on their independence, and that we were under obligations to that people, of which it was quite impossible to divest ourselves. We ought not to try to do it, because the influence of the British Government depended very largely upon the impression prevailing in all parts of the world that Great Britain would keep her promises, and that the British Government was a Government to be trusted. Nothing was more calculated to shake our dominion in South Africa and in other parts of the world than that the idea should get abroad that we were anxious to avail ourselves of technicalities and of legal quibbles for the purpose of divesting ourselves of any responsibilities we had undertaken. It did not facilitate the solution of difficulties that the representative of the Government had endeavoured to minimise the responsibilities which undoubtedly we had incurred towards these people. It was true that some precaution was taken in 1884, when the Transvaal State was turned into the South African Republic, and stipulations were made that it should not interfere beyond its own borders; and what the hon. Gentleman had said about the continued interference of the South African Republic in the affairs of Swaziland had been a dereliction of that solemn Convention. The hon. Gentleman shook his head; but he must remind him that by the Convention of 1884, the Government of the South African Republic pledged itself, while strictly adhering to the boundaries defined in the first article of the Convention, to do its utmost to prevent any of its inhabitants from encroaching upon the land beyond the boundaries. That was an engagement, as far as one could be given, that the South African Republic would not interfere in Swaziland and the surrounding countries. It was absurd for the Government to throw the whole blame for the present state of things on the unfortunate Swazis. The contention of the Government was that the Swazis' own acts had rendered it impossible to protect them. He would like to call the attention of the House to the way in which the concessions had been obtained. His point was that we were so far responsible for those concessions that it did not lie in our mouth to make them an excuse for saying that we could not help the Swazis. In a Report on Swaziland made by Sir Francis de Winton in 1890, it was stated—

> "The late King and Council have parted, not only with all their territory, but with rights which could only belong to the Government of the country, to a lot of adventurers whose sole object is to make money. It is quite true that the Swazi king and his countrymen did not understand the nature of these concessions, but it is equally true that they signed the documents and received the money for them. It is said that some of these concessions have been purchased by the Government of the Transvaal."

If any were purchased by the Government of the Transvaal, whether that Government were within their legal rights or not, they were breaking the stipulations and guarantees of the convention they had previously entered into; and if the English Government allowed these concessions to come into the hands of the Transvaal Government they could not afterwards turn round and say to the Swazis that it was their own act that had rendered their protection impossible. Another point was that these concessions were made prior to the Convention of 1890; but in 1890, after these concessions had been made, and after, according to the present attitude of the Secretary for the Colonies, it had become impossible to protect the Swazis any longer, we entered into a Convention by which the independence of Swaziland was guaranteed. The Under Secretary had referred several times to the conduct of the late Government, and to their promise to reconsider the Convention of 1890. What was that promise?

> "Her Majesty's Government are prepared to consider such questions as the Government of the South African Republic may bring before them, with the desire to meet the wishes of the South African Republic as far as possible with due regard to European and native rights."

All, therefore, that the Government when they came into office were pledged to do was to reconsider the Convention of 1890 "with due regard to native rights." There was no pledge to give up native rights. He had not a word to say against the original design of Lord Ripon. Lord Ripon found that the existing state of things in Swaziland was most inconvenient, and that it was most desirable to put an end to it; but he protested in the most solemn manner when he first addressed the Prime Minister of the Cape, at the time the negotiations with the South African Republic were begun, that nothing should be done, not only unless the Swazi people consented, but also unless Her Majesty's Government were convinced that they gave an intelligent and reasonable consent. Thus he acted in exactly the same manner as Lord Knutsford, reserving specifically, clearly, and positively native rights, and making the consent of the Swazis a condition precedent to the wishes of the South African Republic being carried out. The Convention of 1893 was made on those lines, and in that Convention the right of the Swazis to consent or not to consent was most specifically reserved. The utmost possible pressure had been put upon the Swazis by Her Majesty's Government to induce them to accept the organic proclamations. Sir Henry Loch, in a message, after pointing out all the advantages of the Organic Proclamation and using every argument he could to induce them to accept it, said—

> "It is therefore the duty of the Swazi Queen Regent to sign the Proclamation, which I direct her to do at once, or, say, within six weeks of the return of the deputation."

Yet, in spite of all that had been done and could be done by Her Majesty's Government, that which Lord Ripon declared in 1892 to be a condition precedent to the gratification of the wishes of the South African Republic had not been fulfilled. But there was another circumstance in this matter to which he thought the attention of the House ought to be directed, and that was the extraordinary ratification of the abortive Convention of 1893, which was executed by the Government of the South African Republic. That Convention had to be ratified by the Volksraad before it came into operation. This was the ratification, and he asked the attention of the House to it because the Government had notice of it:—

> "The First Volksraad having taken note of the Convention agreed to on November 8, 1893, between the South African Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; having in view Article 12 of the said Convention, wherein it is provided that the ratification must take place on or before June 30, 1894; seeing with regret that Her Majesty's Government has up to the present been unwilling to agree to conditions by which the just claims and rights of this Republic will be acknowledged; considering that it is desirable once more to make public that the approving of the Convention cannot be considered as a relinquishment of the claims and rights which the Republic possess to territory situated to the east of that belonging to the Republic, and expressly reserving to itself those claims and rights as was done by the ratification of the Convention of 1890; abiding by everything that was said in that ratification; being convinced that no other solution of this long-delayed Swazi question can be arrived at than the total incorporation of Swaziland into the Republic; considering that the intention to arrive at this is evident from Clauses 6 and 7 of the Convention; considering also that incorporation must logically follow from the granting of the franchise to certain persons in Swaziland; regarding the present Convention as a further transitory measure, and still trusting in the promises of Her Majesty's Government, resolves to ratify the said Convention, and to instruct the Government to negotiate further with Her Majesty's Government in the spirit of this Resolution."

So Her Majesty's Government had notice in that ratification that the Volksraad only intended the agreement to be a transitory measure, which was finally to lead to the total incorporation of Swaziland into the South African Republic. Had that notice ever been withdrawn? [Mr. BUXTON remarked, that a protest had been made against it.] The protest was this:—

> "In discussing these affairs with President Kruger, you (Sir Henry Loch) should state plainly that the conditional ratification given by the Volksraad to the Convention of 1893 has made an unfavourable impression on the minds of Her Majesty's Government; unless those conditions are withdrawn it will be necessary to make a formal declaration on the part of Her Majesty's Government that they in no respect accept them."

Had that formal declaration been made? He supposed not, because the ratification had never been withdrawn. Then had the Convention of 1894 been ratified by the Volksraad? If so, had it been ratified simply, or only in the same way as the Convention of 1893? Had it the same rider appended to it? The Government could not divest themselves of their responsibilities in this matter. Whether technically bound or not, they were undoubtedly morally bound to do their utmost to protect the unfortunate Swazis. [Mr BUXTON: Hear, hear.] The Swazis could not be said to have made it impossible by their concessions for Her Majesty's Government to protect them, because those concessions were made when we were to a certain extent responsible for the administration of the country and for the advice given to the King, and because these concessions were made before the Convention of 1890, in which the Government still upheld the independence of Swaziland. He trusted, therefore, that the Government would do all in their power to preserve the Swazis from the horrors of an armed invasion by the South African Republic. The forbearance which had always been shown to the Government and the inhabitants of the Transvaal, notwithstanding the successive inroads which they had made upon the territories of the neighbouring tribes, in violation of the stipulations of the Conventions of 1891 and 1894, gave us a very strong claim upon that Government, and we might well ask them to abstain from any course which would be incompatible with the honour of this country and which would disappoint the expectations which we had raised in the minds of the natives. The House of Commons ought to urge the Government to take steps to induce the Government of the South African Republic to abstain from violence. and not to *brusquer* the situation.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale), thought the Under Secretary for the Colonies might, without injuring the interests of the Swazis or of this nation, reply to two questions which he wished to put. Having witnessed attacks upon natives, and knowing that the accompanying incidents were the burning of villages and the slaughter of women and children, he could not but feel great sympathy for a native race when he heard that an armed force was collecting on their frontier for the purpose of invasion. He wished to know whether the present Government had endeavoured in any way to obtain practical, material safeguards for the protection of the Swazis. The safeguards on which we were supposed to rely in the past had one by one disappeared. The suzerainty over the Transvaal had gone, and the independence of the Swazis had gone, and he did not see what was to prevent an incorporation of Swaziland in the Transvaal after a Boer invasion. Then the Government of this country had made no attempt to assert our rights in connection with the administration of the affairs of Swaziland. Why had we transferred all our rights to the other partner concerned in the question? In the correspondence a reason was given, and it was said that we were debarred from annexing Swaziland by our Treaty obligations. But how was it that the South African Republic was not debarred by its obligations from annexing the country? There was a great deal more that required explanation, but the subject could not be dealt with adequately in a hurried, sudden, and partial debate. While deprecating, therefore, the method which had been employed to bring this most important matter before their attention, he hoped that the Government would consent to throw some additional light on the points to which he had referred.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby): I join the hon. Member in deprecating the continuance of this discussion. What the Under Secretary has said is perfectly true, namely, that what is said in this House may tend to prevent a peaceful solution of this question. The object of the Government is, that this question should be peacefully settled, and that we should not be involved in a conflict in this matter at all, for that would be a most serious evil, perhaps one of the most serious evils that could befall South Africa. My opinion, therefore, is, that everyone ought to endeavour to contribute to a solution of that character. To encourage either party to take any action which would prevent a peaceful solution and cause a conflict would be to incur grave responsibility. The hon. Member very properly asks what the object of the Government is. Their desire, as is shown in the convention. is to preserve the native rights. As a guarantee of that, the Government have appointed an English Consul to be present to carry out the safeguards which have been introduced into the Convention. That shows what is the object of the Government in the matter; and I, with a great sense of responsibility, would say to the House that if it is their desire, as I am sure it must be their desire, to prevent armed conflict in Africa in this matter, the more reserve is exercised at this moment and upon this occasion the better. In that sense I appeal to the House not to continue this discussion.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): After what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman we will have no choice, I think, but to take the advice which, on his responsibility as a Minister and Leader of the House, he has given to us upon this question. I confess I abstain from criticising the course which the Government have taken with great reluctance. I should especially like to press the Government a little more upon the safeguards which they say they have provided for the Swazis. I should like to ask whether, and how far, they think the sending of a Consul, whose only method of action is to send despatches to the Home Government, is likely to be effective. But as the House is told that any rash word from us may precipitate conflict where conflict may otherwise be avoided, we have no choice but to leave the responsibility where, after all, it must finally rest—namely, with Her Majesty's Government; and to reserve any criticism, and it may be censure, until a period when, I fear, it will be too late, or may be too late, for the protection of those whose interests we have at heart. Should that unhappy contingency arise, we shall be able to say that we, at all events, are not to blame for any evil consequences that may ensue from the policy which Her Majesty's Government have on their responsibility undertaken.

Mr. COCHRANE, in view of the statement of the responsible Minister of the Crown—although, he said, the object of the Motion was to avoid danger—asked leave to withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION.

THE TELEPHONE SERVICE.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS nominated the Select Committee on Telephone Service:—That Captain Bagot, Mr. Baird, Mr. Benn, Sir Charles Cameron, Mr. John Ellis, Sir James Fergusson, Sir Julian Goldsmid, Sir John Gorst, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. Solicitor General, Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. Moulton, Mr. Snape, Lord Stanley, and Mr. Tully be Members of the Committee. That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records. That five be the quorum.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ARMY SUPPLY (INDIAN CONTRIBUTION.)

Order for Committee read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

Amendment proposed—

> "To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'the military appropriations in aid paid by India, in addition to the payment by that Country of the cost of the British Army in India, and of its transport to and from India, are excessive and unjust to India."—(*Mr. Hanbury*)

Instead thereof.

The hon. **Member** said he rose to call attention to the large appropriations in aid contributed out of the Indian Exchequer, and to move that the military appropriations in aid paid by India, in addition to the payment by that country of the cost of the British Army in India, and of its transport to and from India, are excessive and unjust to India. The home military charges appearing on these Estimates consisted of two classes. First, *matériel*—that was to say, stores supplied to India; and secondly, *personnel*, troops actually paid for by India to this country. From the manner in which the Estimates were presented, it was impossible to find out to which Army the charges ought to be apportioned, whether to the British troops in India or to the native troops in India, but, after making all proper allowances, there remained upon the Estimates for men alone the large appropriation in aid of £1,350,000, which was actually expended by India on account of troops actually in England. That sum was increased by the loss on exchange to the extent of about three-fifths, and, of course, in tens of rupees amounted to a very considerable sum indeed. In the next place, it had to be remembered that the whole of this sum was spent in England—that was to say, it was a sum going out of India and wholly spent in England, and that, too, without India having any control whatever over it. For the expenditure of this money even the Secretary of State for India, sitting in this House, was in no sense responsible. That was a very serious state of things; and the mischief was increased when one recollected that this sum, over a million and a quarter sterling a year, was exclusive of what India paid for the troops when they were in India itself. The amount might be divided into two portions—one for the non-effective and the other for the effective services. India paid £548,000 a year for effective services and over £800,000 for non-effective services in this country. Both those charges had been bitterly complained of, not only by the people of India, but by long successions of Viceroys and Commanders-in-Chief in India, and even Secretaries of State in this country. In the Cabinet, however strong a Secretary of State might be, there were two men whom he had to fight persistently, whose interests were diametrically opposed to his, and who represented a different class of taxpayers—the Secretary of State for War and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. And, in addition, it was a difficult matter for the Secretary of State even to fight the House of Commons itself, because every penny the House of Commons could throw on the Indian Exchequer was money saved to this country. Altogether he was bound to say it was a very bad system. It was a system opposed to anything that went on in this country. Not only did they not contribute a single penny of this money, but the House of Commons, on the contrary, seemed to endeavour to shift as much of the burden as was possible upon India. He had not brought forward the Motion from philanthropic motives, but his attention had been directed to this Vote entirely by his constituents, who represented that it was, to a great extent, a Lancashire question. The people of Lancashire felt that a great number of these appropriations-in-aid and charges which fell upon India were charges which might fairly be borne by the Imperial Government, and the result of the Imperial Government not bearing them was that a deficit was created in the Indian Exchequer which was supplied by import duties, which Lancashire had to pay. The non-effective Vote amounted to £810,000. Roughly speaking, that sum might be divided into £300,000 to officers, which was almost entirely for retired pay and compensation on the abolition of purchase, and the remaining £500,000 was in connection with out-pensions to men. With regard to the latter, he had been able to get no information whatever as to how this large amount fell upon India. It struck him that in these days of short service, when pensions were becoming rarer, it was a peculiar thing that the pensions which India had to pay should be increasing in number each year. He would also observe that no non-effective charge had ever been placed upon any country connected with England, except India itself. Then again, there had been a most enormous increase in the non-effective charges. Up to the year 1822, although India maintained 20,000 British troops, the non-effective charge in respect of those troops in England was absolutely nothing whatever. Then in 1822 no charge was effected, and the British East India Company made an arrangement with the Government at home, by which the non-effective charge was to be fixed at £60,000. That arrangement continued up to the time when the Crown took over India from the East India Company, since when the charges had grown from year to year, by leaps and bounds. Not only had there been this enormous increase, but they found an Ex-Viceroy like Lord Northbrook, speaking in another place, only two years ago, declaring that although since 1861 endeavours had been made almost every year to arrive at some fair and permanent settlement between this country and India as to what those charges ought to be, no such settlement had yet been arrived at. In 1861, soon after the Crown took over India from the East India Company, another arrangement was made in respect to the non-effective charges, which had hitherto been £60,000 a year, but which were then fixed at £3 10s. per head. He was not quite sure whether the £3 10s. was on the one-third of the whole non-effective service, which would be a fair proportion for India, or whether it was on the whole non-effective services. If it was on the whole the charge formerly would be £315,000, but if on one-third, which was his contention, it meant that the non-effective Vote was formerly only £105,000, as against £810,000 in the present year. Then came further changes. They had, in the first place, the abolition of purchase, which very slightly affected the Indian Army, but of course India had to pay for that. Then they had the compulsory retirement of officers at an early age, which was a purely English matter, but India had to bear its share of that. In addition, in 1870 an alteration was made in the mode of assessing India's fair share of these pensions. Speaking on this latter subject, Lord Northbrook said :

> In 1870 a most complicated and extraordinary plan was imposed upon India under which, year by year, the actual pensions India was supposed to be called upon to pay in India in consequence of the abolition of purchase in the British Army was capitalised, and the capital value year by year was charged upon India by the British Exchequer."

The result of that was that by 1884 the charges had reached the very large sum at which they stood at the present moment. Lord Northbrook, in 1892, stated that, though the arrangement for the capitalisation of the purchase pensions ceased in 1884, he had no materials in his possession (though he had acted as Chairman of the Committee which had been appointed on the subject in 1872), as to what had happened since then. He (Mr. Hanbury), without going into any question of arithmetic as as to these charges, argued that they ought to listen to the views of Ex-Viceroys, Commanders-in-Chief, and Indian Secretaries, who had persistently stated that it was absolutely unjust that India should have to bear so very large a proportion of pensions and charges as were thrown upon her Exchequer simply and solely in connection with such changes as the abolition of purchase and the compulsory retirement of officers, which did not affect the interests of India at all, but were entirely and absolutely English matters. He would call attention to what had been said on the question by Members of the present Government, and others who were entitled to speak with authority. Lord Ripon said :—

> "The argument as regards the abolition of the purchase system appears to be particularly strong. It certainly appears to me exceedingly unjust that the Indian Revenue should be called upon to bear any charge in order to get rid of this peculiarly English matter."

Lord Kimberley, speaking on the same subject, said :—

> "Part of the increase was incurred owing to measures carried into effect by the English Government for purposes unconnected with India, such as the abolition of the purchase system, and the compulory retirement of officers."

Lord Northbrook stated that, after sitting for 14 years upon this Committee, he had found it utterly impossible for that Committee, hampered as it was by the Treasury, to go into the real questions that were at the bottom of these payments, and, because of this, he threw up his appointment in disgust. The result, as Lord Northbrook said, was—

> "that after 14 years' work the main contention had not been considered, but was altogether put on one side ; the main question after 20 years had been utterly and entirely ignored, and the difficulty remained."

That was a strong statement for such a man as Lord Northbrook to make. He now wished to refer to the effective vote, which amounted to £548,000. And here again he had in the first place to complain of the way in which the Estimates were presented. It was most misleading. The vote was described as—

> "payment by the Indian Government in respect of home effective charges (other than deferred pay), for the regular forces serving in India."

Any one reading this would suppose that the money was for forces serving in India ; but the fact was, that the charge had nothing whatever to do with such service. This money thus charged upon India was actually expended upon our home garrisons, upon troops actually serving in England and available at any moment for the defence of England. The charges were placed under different votes, and the Estimates were presented in such a way that it was difficult to understand them and to ascertain what the charges really were. How was the charge for the effective service arrived at? It was the payment for the Indian drafts, for troops going out to India every year. He did not know what the amount of the Indian drafts was, but as the troops in India were, roughly speaking, something like 70,000, and they stayed out in India for five years, the average number of the drafts was probably about 14,000 or 15,000. It was upon that that the Estimate ought to be based, but if they based it upon the number of troops going out to India every year, they would get a payment in this country of £40 per man per year, for men who had never been out in India at all, and were actually serving in the garrisons of this country. At present the Estimate was presented in a most misleading form, but he did not blame his right hon. Friend, the Secretary for War, because the system had gone on for years, and one Minister was as responsible for it as another. How was this shown in the Estimates? Not as a charge of £40 for every man connected with the drafts which would ultimately go to India, but, as Lord Northbrook had said, from the moment every man was recruited in England; and India paid his passage out and we paid it home. Although India paid for everything connected with him in India, yet we forced upon the Indian Government all the expenses of a man forming a draft from the time he was recruited. Such a thing was monstrous. They were told that it was a capitation grant of £7 10s. per head on the 73,000 troops serving in India, but what could be the connection between the payment of these men serving in England, and the capitation grant in respect of the 73,000 men serving in India? Most of these men formed important portions of our home garrisons, and a large number of them were at Aldershot before they went out to India. Not only did we lay those heavy charges upon India, but we were so interfering in the Legislation of India at the present moment with regard to troops which she had to maintain at her own cost, that if they accepted the statement of Sir George White, the Commander-in-Chief in India, the charges upon India in respect of her troops would be very largely increased, and larger drafts would have to be sent out. He wished to refer to something which one did not like to dwell upon, and it was the forcing of this something by that House upon India that would necessitate an addition of thousands of troops to those now serving in India, and the fact that one-third of the troops were invalided had led the Commander-in-Chief to point out how dangerous it would be in case of war if we had to depend upon these troops, decimated by disease as they were. Not only did we place these charges upon India, but fads too, and the result would be larger drafts, perhaps of 20,000 men or more from England, and he wished to know whether, in the event of such an increase the Government would still continue the iniquitous system of which he was complaining. It must be recollected that the troops only served five years in India. In that case England profited by seven years out of their 12 years, service. It had also been said that we had the recruiting and the training of these men, but if we came to the question of training, the balance was on the side of India. We certainly owed a great deal to India for the training of our troops received in India, and for the experience our generals derived there from moving troops upon a large scale, which was much more beneficial than any mere barrack drill we could teach in England. It was further said that the troops in this country acted as a reserve for India, but, looking at all the facts, he ventured to think that the balance was again on the side of India. If our troops went out to India, India paid for them; and for cases of emergency outside India not only had we drawn upon them, but also upon the Native Indian army to fight our battles, and in that case India had to bear the whole burden. The more they looked at these Indian military charges the more unjust they appeared to be. The injustice was all the greater when we compared the treatment of India with the treatment which our Colonies received. He referred to non-effective charges, and did not think that any other dependency of England had ever been called upon to bear them. India received distinctive treatment in this respect. In Halifax, for instance, 1,487 troops were stationed, costing £126,000 a year, but not one penny was that Colony asked to pay towards the cost. Then again, there was the case of the Cape, which occupied a somewhat different position from Natal. We had always had troops at the Cape and at Natal, and up to two years ago Natal was not a self-governing Colony to the extent it was now. There were 3,679 troops at the Cape and Natal, the larger proportion being at the Cape. What happened? Not one farthing was charged to Cape Colony, because it was self-governing and would have resisted the charge; but £4,000 was charged on Natal, because it was not a self-governing Colony and had not the same power of resistance. They ought to apply the same principle to India. What were the facts with regard to the Crown Colonies? The troops in Ceylon cost £109,453, and Ceylon paid £81,750; in Hong Kong they cost £167,484, and the colony contributed £40,000; in Maritius they cost £66,212, and the Colony paid £14,700. Again, take the case of Egypt. We had spent large sums of British money upon barracks in Egypt, while in India, our own possession, we had spent something like ten or fifteen millions out of the revenues of that country on barracks for British troops. But, apart from that question, the cost of the troops in Egypt was £283,000, and all that Egypt paid over was £87,000. India had to pay for arms, accoutrements, barrack, hospital, and other stores, recruiting expenses at home, headquarters, administration expenses, the cost of sea transport, and non-effective charges; but not one of these charges was placed on Egypt or the Colonies. Lord Northbrook had stated that the very largest amount that ought to be paid by India was £5 a head, but whether the charge was £5 or £7 10s. some definite arrangement ought to be come to; it was not fair to India that we should go on in this haphazard way. He had raised the question in spite of the fact that a Committee had been promised by the Secretary of State for India for dealing with the whole question of the Indian home charges, because if the facts of the last 30 or 50 years proved anything, they proved that these Commissions and Committees were of no use whatever to India. The history of these Commissions and Committees formed a very curious chapter in the history of our national life. In 1874 a Committee, of which Mr. Fawcett was a member, reported that charges had been imposed upon India which ought to be borne by England, and agreed with Lord Salisbury's statement that the most effectual way of securing financial justice to India was for the House of Commons to be constantly watchful on her behalf. How could they be watchful when the facts presented were so utterly misleading, that no one, unless he went very carefully into the matter, could judge of their real character? In 1875, another Committee was appointed, over which Mr. Bouverie presided. That Committee made certain recommendations as to the cost of the troops; but, although they felt strongly upon the question of policy, they could say nothing, because their hands were tied by the terms of reference. No agreement on these charges was come to until the Public Accounts' Committee intervened in 1878, and declared that some definite arrangement must be made. In that year the present Lord Derby, then Secretary to the Treasury, admitted that India had been charged a great deal too much in respect of these military charges. The Commission of which Lord Northbrook was chairman was appointed in 1879. But it was not until 1886 that they could get any accounts. A long despatch was received from the Government of India, in which they took up the position that, while on the mere question of arithmetic the charges were too high, this matter ought to be treated as one of policy. This despatch was handed to the Commission by the Secretary to the Treasury with an intimation that the Government had already considered the question, and had made up its mind with regard to the question of policy. Two or three years afterwards, Lord Northbrook, finding it impossible to effect any real financial alteration, threw up his position as chairman of the Committee in disgust. This case had been admitted by a long succession of Viceroys, Commanders-in-Chief, and Secretaries of State. The present Secretary of State the other evening said that, although he would not admit that in regard to the ordinary home charges, he must admit that in regard to these military home charges there was a case. This view had been endorsed by Committee after Committee, and Commission after Commission, and now they had the same offer made—that the matter should be again referred to a Commission. If this were a question of policy, the Members representing the India Office, the War Office, and the Treasury, were perfectly able to deal with it; if it was a question of administration and of detail, then the staff of these departments could cope with it. But Committees and Commissions were too often appointed to drive off the real issue and avoid a decision. That had gone on a great deal too long. Indeed, it had been our practice ever since India was taken over by the Crown. He was quite sure the people of this country did not want to levy any undue charges upon India. He had confined himself entirely to the military charges actually appearing upon the Estimates, and had said nothing about the large appropriations in aid outside of these Estimates; but he thought he had been able to show that the charges made upon India in respect of them were most scandalous and unjustifiable. He could not understand upon what principle of justice, India, after having defrayed the cost of the troops going out and coming home, should be called upon to pay the additional sum of £600,000. It was time for Government to face this question and to run away from it proposing a Commission. It was the interests of his Lancashire constituents in this question which first induced him to bring it forward, and he was quite sure that if Lancashire and India worked together every English and Scotch Member, feeling that the question touched their purses or their honour, would unite in seeing that this long-standing evil was put an end to, and would set to work to remedy it.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) in rising to second the Motion, complimented the Member for Preston upon his interesting argument. About two years ago he had himself drawn the attention of the right hon. Minister to the injustice of placing upon India the Army purchase charges and the retirement charges. He first remembered it when sitting at Calcutta on a Military and Finance Commission in conjunction with Sir George Balfour. Ever since that time the subject had been urged by almost every European and Native authority throughout India; and, although something had been done, there still remained a very heavy residue of charge against India. He thought that his hon. Friend the Member for Preston deserved well of the people of India for bringing the subject forward in this authoritative way. As his hon. Friend had never served in the East, no suggestion of prejudice could be made in regard to his action. The real gist of the matter lay in the effective charge. It was a question of recruits. The English argument, as he understood it in former days in India, was this:—

> "We are sending you out a made soldier; we have spent a good deal of money upon his training, of which you in India get the advantage. Therefore, we in England are entitled to some compensation from India."

That was the English Army view, to which the Indian reply was as follows:

> "No doubt we get a made soldier who has been trained at some cost to you; but, while he has been training, he has been borne on the regiment and has served as an effective portion of the garrison in England, and, if war had broken out, would have formed an effective portion of the forces for England's national defence. During that time he has been of use and value to England, and England has received the value of her outlay upon him."

That had always been, and always would be, India's argument until this matter was redressed. The grievance was increased by the absurd way in which the charge was disguised in the Estimates. Nobody, who could not read between the lines or see behind the scenes, could understand the manner in which the charge was made. Instead of stating the charge as £40 or £50 a head on the men sent out, it was put down as a capitation grant on the whole 70,000 or 80,000 men in India, and in this form it did not look so much. In regard to the transport charges for the reliefs, no complaint could, perhaps, be made on account of the cost of taking the men out being charged to India, but that country was also saddled with the entire cost of bringing the men home. India had always contended that the men coming back were valuable to the English Army—coming back, as they did in many cases, to service in their own country, and that the cost of bringing them back, ought, therefore, to be borne by England. Another growing grievance, which was becoming most seriously noticed in India, was in relation to the new cantonment Regulations, the result of which had been an enormous increase in disease. These men, who were our own flesh and blood, were being decimated by disease. The new Regulations were entirely owing to the action of the House, and he would not be doing his duty as a Member of that House if he did not call attention to the fact, though he was thankful that he and some other hon. Members had purged themselves from responsibility for this awful result. The return of Sir George White mentioned one-third, but he was afraid that one-half of the men were suffering from disease, which might easily have been made preventable, and which was effectually prevented until the House interfered from a false sense of morality. If war broke out in India it might be necessary to send out a whole fresh army corps to repair the ravages caused by the disease. Morality had benefited not at all. India was placed under heavy additional charges in deference to Lord Roberts and other authorities, and yet all that was entirely nullified by having 30,000 or 40,000 man diseased, owing to the new Regulations. Every military officer in India was dead against these Regulations, which had also received the protests of the Council and others. They should not be doing their duty to their fellow-subjects in India if they hesitated to speak out. Their speaking out might possibly give offence to some, but they had acted under a grievous misapprehension. They had been the means of inflicting great evils on their fellow-countrymen—evils which would last not for a year or two, but probably for a lifetime. Now, if the House chose to interfere they ought to pay the bill, and not cast on others the cost of these moral vagaries, He hoped he might be excused for having spoken so earnestly on this question. He had spoken from the bottom of his heart, because he knew exactly how this evil had come about. The House should look favourably upon these financial questions, because he could assure them that the feelings of the natives of India were very keen on this subject. He urged hon. Members opposite, who had shown so much generous consideration towards the feelings and sentiments and the wishes of the natives of India, to try and get a reduction of these charges. It would be a most gracious thing if the Government saw their way to take these charges in hand, and thus extend a helping hand to India in the hour of her financial difficulties.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs) said, he had a very strong sympathy with the two speeches to which they had just listened. He thoroughly agreed that every consideration ought to be shown to the interests of India, and, above all, that that House should be most careful that, sometimes without intending it, it did not infringe upon those interests. They all knew how apt the House was sometimes to be carried away by most praiseworthy, philanthropic, and excellent motives, but he agreed with his hon. Friend that there had been occasions when the House, acting under the influence of these motives, had placed burdens of one sort or another on India which that country ought not to bear. Having listened to the very strong repudiation of his hon. Friend who had just sat down of any desire to interfere with the wishes and feelings of the people of India in an unnecessary way, he might assume, though his memory did not enable him to be confident, that he was one of those who voted for the retention of the Cotton Duties. He was so fastidious that he was sure his hon. Friend would never have countenanced for a moment any action on the part of the Government which would have even the appearance of injuring Indian interests. He presumed his hon. Friend voted for the retention of the Cotton Duties in accordance with the desire of the people of India.

Sir R. TEMPLE: Alas! I voted on the other side.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN admitted his mistake. They had listened to a very strong speech from the Member for Preston, but his speech was stronger than the foundation on which it was built. He did not think that his hon. Friend, who had just awoke somewhat tardily to the circumstances, could have informed himself very well of the facts. One of his strong points—and here he was joined by the Member for Richmond—was that it was a monstrous thing they should make the people of India pay for the abolition of purchase in the Army. They were told that, from the British point of view, the abolition of purchase might have been a good thing, but the Indian people cared nothing about it. How monstrous to make them pay? Would the House believe that from first to last India did not pay a single penny in respect of the abolition of purchase?

Mr. HANBURY referred to Vote 14:—

> "Retired pay and gratuities, including compensation awarded by the Army Purchase Commissioners;" "sum to be received in aid of Army Estimates to meet the non-effective charges for the Regular Forces serving in India."

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, that was very true, and he admitted that was a misleading heading and ought not to be there; but the House might take it from him, with regard to the abolition of purchase, none of the charge had ever been placed on the revenue of India. Then his hon. Friend quoted from the speech of Lord Northbrook in the other House. He was not going to attack or defend Lord Northbrook. He was an old friend of his; but of all people entitled to complain of delay Lord Northbrook was the last, because he was at the head of the Committee which had investigated these home charges. Then his hon. Friend said that Lord Northbrook threw the post up in disgust. It was the first he had heard of it, and it was the first those who sat on the Committee had heard of it. His hon. Friend also found a great grievance in the arrangement with regard to the non-effective charges. The Committee had nothing to do with the non-effective charges; and let him tell the House that the Government of India never raised any objection to the manner in which the non-effective charges had been settled. His hon. Friend said as to pensions he could not understand how the figure was arrived at; all he knew was it was going up by leaps and by bounds. Why, the method was a very simple and, in his view, a very just one. When a soldier went to pension his services were examined, and India paid its share of that pension for the proportion of his service spent in India. This country paid for the portion of time which the soldier spent at home, which included the earliest days of his infancy. That could not be considered an injurious arrangement. Some time ago his prospective pension was capitalised, and that sum was divided between the two Governments on the terms he had stated. But now a still more exact method was adopted. When a soldier was to be pensioned, there was taken what might be called his "horoscope"—that was to say, they estimated how long he ought to live, and, having found the time he ought to live, they charged his pension. The proportion for the years spent in India was charged to the Indian Government. If the man died too soon India lost; if he lived too long this country lost; but, on the whole, the "horoscope," being calculated on undoubted tables, there was a perfectly equitable distribution of this charge. This was an instance of one of those terrible evils which the hon. Member for Preston was so apt to discover—where some person in one of the offices was endeavouring to mislead him and everyone else who looked into the Estimates; and he could not understand where this mystery arose. The hon. Member said that pensions had increased. They had increased because the whole system of pensions had increased. One of the principal reasons for the introduction 25 years ago of the Short Service system was the intolerable amount of pensions which Long Service had in prospect for this country. The pension list had gone up in the same way as the other, because the Government could not break faith with those who served under the old Long Service system, and so long as these men retired on pension the Government must fulfil their engagements to them; this was the sole reason why there was this great increase in pensions. He had seen it stated, as one of the grievances of India, that she had suffered so much by the introduction of Short Service. According to an actuarial calculation, it was shown that under Short Service the decrease on the home charges to India was no less than £390,000 a year. The main point, however, was, what was called home charges for training and preparing. Not only as a Member of Parliament, but as Head of the War Office, he said that this country ought to behave generously to India. His contention was, that we did behave generously to India, and it would be an evil day for India if her short-sighted advocates were to come forward and to urge her to claim her pound of flesh: because, if India did so, then this country would be obliged to claim its pound of flesh; and he thought our pound of flesh would be considerably heavier than that of India. He had some familiarity with these subjects, because more than 20 years ago he sat for two or three years on a Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Ayrton—Mr. Fawcett being one of the members. The same thing was discussed then, and the point they differed upon was—what were to be the relations between the two countries? If they once settled that point, then the whole matter became comparatively easy. In those days they were always told how cheaply the Indian Government had managed its military affairs in the old days before the Mutiny. They were also told that India in those days got its recruits with great ease, that they cost India very little, that there was an admirable supply, and that India maintained its own troops in a state of great efficiency. But those were the Presidency troops, which were very few in number; and the system pursued then was to send out from the depôt 800 or 1,000 men yearly. There was not, however, much consideration shown to a recruit in those days. A recruit was captured, perhaps, within two or three months of embarkation, and he was packed off with others to take a voyage round the Cape—untrained men for the most part, though learning a little of the goose step in the course of their long voyage. The Government had been advised many years ago by the Sanitary Commission that it ought not, in justice to the soldiers, to send a young man out to India until he was at least 20 years of age and trained. What happened to the men who were sent out in this manner? The best medical authorities agreed in saying that after eight years the soldier deteriorated in health in India. Therefore the Government had fixed eight years as the extreme time that a soldier was to be kept in India. But the poor men who went out from the depôt at home to the little Presidency armies were kept there until they either died or were sent home in an exhausted state to die in this country. The Government preferred to send men out at the age best for their health, and to bring them back in a sound condition of health, and that was why the expense of the recruits for Indian purposes was so much greater than it was in those earlier days. Then there were the Queen's troops. Every battalion in India had a depôt company for each battalion at home. It was on the Indian establishment; it was paid by India; it was at one time not even voted in the numbers of the Estimates in this House. If hon. Members could conceive that system being applied to the 70,000 men that India now had, was it likely that there would be very much gain in the cost that India would incur? The hon. Member quoted the fact that £10 was allowed about 30 years ago for all arms per man. In order to show the concession that involved in India—a concession far beyond what was equitable to this country—he drew the attention of the hon. Member to the fact that the Committee of Investigation presided over by Sir Alexander Tulloch recommended a capitation rate to keep up the forces in India at the rate. For an infantry soldier £11 1s. 6d; cavalry soldier, £15 16s.; artillery soldier, £23 13s. Yet the Government, out of consideration for the circumstances of India, accepted £10. He thought that this fact showed that there had not been on the part of this country any desire to deal in the unfair way sometimes represented with India. But that was not quite a scientific basis on which to base the arrangement, and their efforts had been since directed to attain that. There was, first, an inquiry held under the auspices of the late Mr. Sclater-Booth, and then Lord Northbrook; and finally a provisional settlement was made of £7 10s. on the strength of the forces in India. This sum had been taken, and it had been continued from year to year. It was built up on a certain calculation of the expenses, and the point which the House would have to consider and to ask was, whether this £7 10s. for a man in India was necessary. He would state the War Office view of what ought to be paid equitably by this country. India should pay the extra cost of the numbers on the establishment, which would not be maintained if the Indian Army had not to be kept up. It might be said on the one hand—

> "Oh! morally to set off against that you should look at the advantage you get from the experience in India of the officers and men—the reservoir of force you have in that country."

On the other hand, he put this question, which he thought would involve a much larger sum—

> "Supposing we had not to maintain the forces in India, what would be the effect on our arms at home?"

If England had not this great duty of maintaining the garrison of India, it would be possible to adopt an organisation for our Army which would be adequate for all purposes of home defence and yet effect an enormous saving on the present establishment. He set that fact off as at least equal to the supposed benefit derived by this country from the existence of a portion of the Army under excellent conditions for training and experience in India. The War Office had to obtain its recruits young, and the recruit, who was only drafted in the autumn of the year, could not be sent out under 21 years of age. Therefore, the home establishment had to keep the recruit for 18 months or two years before he could be sent to India, and during that time he was not of much service for Army purposes. In case of war he would not be used; the War Office would make use of the Reserve; and the hon. Member had not mentioned that India did not pay one penny of the existing Reserve. In respect of these infantry recruits, whom the War Office kept for 18 months, India was charged only for six months' pay and maintenance at the depôt and with the regiment. Then India was charged with only one-fifth of the staff of the depôt. The depôts were maintained for Militia, Volunteer, home Army, and training purposes, and the expense of the staff was divided into five parts, with one of which India was charged. That was certainly not too much, and in the old days India would have had to pay, instead of one-fifth, the whole of one company. India was charged nothing for the staff of the regiment, although, if it were conceivable that any other system should be adopted, India would have to maintain a separate staff of her own. Something was charged for educational establishments; but why not? India received the benefit of the educated officer, and she ought to pay a share, not too great. but in proportion to the services of the officers. Some of these educational establishments were very costly. India, again, paid a share of the hospitals and discharge depôts, some of which were maintained almost entirely for herself, and there were some other smaller charges. If the total cost, which equitably enough, could be charged in respect of these recruits were assessed, it would not be the £600,000 asked for now, but over a million. The Home Government gladly and cheerfully remitted nearly one-half of that million. But as partners in this great undertaking surely India and the Home Government should each bear their own share. Neither the present Government nor any Minister at the War Office or the Treasury ever wanted India to pay one *sou* more then it was right to ask of her. But, on the other hand, it was not right that the Home Government should calmly endure the imposition upon the taxpayers of this country of a greatly increased payment in those matters where the cost could be actually earmarked and charged to Indian purposes alone. Lord Northbrook was a consenting party to this payment. He was the chairman of the Committee who recommended it. This £7 10s. rate was not the choice of the Home Government. The Indian Government themselves stated that they preferred it. The War Office would, for many purposes, have rather had a fixed sum independent of the strength of India. It was necessary to explain that this was not a plot and scheme to defraud India by imposing on her expenditure what she ought not to pay. Some of the charges which he had mentioned might be too extravagant, while others might be inadequate. He should have thought that, this matter having dragged along for some years under the Northbrook Committee, the proposal which the Secretary of State for India made was a reasonable one—namely, that there should be an inquiry into these charges in order to have some sort of a settlement and understanding as to the proper sum to be charged. He believed such an inquiry would be most useful;

but he was satisfied that it would not be very favourable, at all events, to Indian finance. The whole position was governed by this consideration—that while the Government were anxious to save India from any expense of which she could with any justice complain, they were not prepared to make what would be practically a contribution in aid of Indian revenues, on the ground of these charges, which they believed, and which had been proved to be, just and equitable.

*SIR GEORGE CHESNEY (Oxford) said, that on both sides the canon had been laid down that in dealing with India in this matter—in which we were the final arbiter—our stand should be taken on the ground of generosity. It was admitted that it was very hard to define and fix an absolute rule on which these charges should be based, and it was urged that, wherever there was a doubt, generosity should be exercised to the benefit of India. [MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: "Hear, hear"] He would mention one case in illustration of the application of this principle of generosity. It had been accurately stated, that when troops were sent to India every possible charge which could be made out in respect of those troops was debited to India.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: My hon. and gallant Friend misrepresents me. I distinctly implied that it was not every possible charge which could be made out. I mentioned the charges which were included, but there are many others which could be made.

*SIR G. CHESNEY said that he would take the responsibility for the statement himself. He believed that every possible charge which could in propriety be made was made in India. From the day the soldier left England his pay was borne by the Indian Government.

MR. CAMPBELL BANNERMAN: His pay outward is borne by us.

*SIR G. CHESNEY said that, on the other hand, the soldier's pay was borne by the Indian Government on his return; and if he went into hospital on reaching England, he was charged on the Indian Government till he recovered. But when India lent troops to England a very different system of accounts was adopted. Frequently of late years India had been called upon to assist, by her forces and establishment, the Imperial forces in expeditions to various parts of the world—such as Abyssinia, the Straits Malta, and Cyprus. Was the pay of the troops employed on these expeditions charged to the Home Government? Not at all. It was argued with a certain degree of plausibility that the Indian troops were only temporarily employed by the Home Government, and that they would have to be maintained by India in any case; and, therefore, while England paid the extra expenses of transport and clothing, the allowances and pay of the officers and men was still borne by India. There might be some reason for this, but he failed to see where the generosity came in. As we were the final authority, and as the system had been frequently protested against by the Indian Government, it would be seen that the high canon of practice laid down by the right hon. Gentleman was not always very carefully observed. It was, perhaps, a small matter in the long run; but undoubtedly it rankled in the minds of the Indian people as a piece of high-handed injustice.

*MR. PHILIP J. STANHOPE (Burnley) said that he must accept the reproach of the Secretary for War for having been but tardily awakened to the importance of this subject. The hon. Member for Preston, the right hon. Baronet who sat by his side, and himself, were Members of a Committee which sat regularly upon those accounts, and they had failed unfortunately to discover the points which the right hon. Gentleman said they ought to have discovered. These Estimates were extremely difficult to understand. One of the very headings in the Estimates, which dealt with the compensation for purchase in India, the right hon. Gentleman himself admitted to be a misleading heading, and therefore it was extremely difficult for an unfortunate private Member like himself to arrive at the real facts.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN pointed out that if it was misleading, it was against themselves, and not in the other direction.

MR. STANHOPE said, they had been told the other day by the Secretary of State for India that they were, one and all of them, Members for India, and he would add that they were anxious to do justice to the people of India. They had had occasion the other day to give a vote by which they wished to do justice to the people of India. Successive Viceroys of India had called attention to what they thought were the extremely inequitable charges thrown upon the people of India by these votes; and, although it was impossible for anyone not in possession of War Office secrets to follow all the details of the non-effective charges, when they came to the effective home charges he thought they must admit that the right hon. Gentleman entirely failed to establish his case on behalf of the Government. It had been stated, and it could not be denied, that we dealt out different measures to India and to the great colonies. When the responsible Government of a colony was able to make the desires of the people of that colony felt, then they did not find the War Office entering into small questions of pounds, shillings, and pence; they were glad to take what they could get; but when it came to India, then they began to consider every farthing of expenditure, and to see how much could be thrown on India and how little could be paid by the ratepayers of Great Britain. Evidently, in order to square the Army Estimates, it had been the successive practice of our Secretaries of State to endeavour to apportion to the Indian taxpayer as large a proportion as possible of these effective and non-effective charges. They were told that a Commission was about to be appointed to inquire into these matters, but his hon. Friend told him in the same breath he did not think it would, on the whole, result in much advantage to the Indian people. What, then, was the good of appointing it? He hoped the result of the Debate would be to awaken the War Office to the importance of this question. If they had not, before these questions of expenditure were discussed again, taken every possible opportunity of examining into them, they would be deserving of reproach.

*MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire), as one who had for many years taken a great interest in the affairs of India, thanked the hon. Member for Preston for raising this question. He did not think the House sufficiently realised how strong was the feeling in India that in the adjustment of the home charges justice had not been done to that country. It was not altogether a disadvantage, he thought, that the people of Lancashire, and through them the people of England, where beginning to feel the effects of the financial unsoundness of India. The amount India paid for pensions and retiring allowances to officers actually came to as much as the entire pay to the native army in India. One of the strongest points raised by his hon. Friend was the very heavy charge for non-effective services placed upon the Indian Exchequer. The Statistical Abstract of India for last year showed that the amount charged for these services was no less than 4,700,000 tens of rupees, almost all of which, he believed, was spent in England. He did not think this included allowances for furlough. The total sum charged for civil and military pensions and furloughs was 8 millions of tens of rupees, the military part, including furlough, coming to more than 5 millions. This was a monstrous charge, and no army in the world bore so heavy a non-effective charge. It had arisen, he believed, from the conditions consequent on the abolition of purchase. The Indian military expenditure had been growing by leaps and bounds, and in ten years it had increased, in round numbers, from 18 million tens of rupees to 24 millions, and, no doubt, this enormous increase was not a little caused by the unfair apportionment of expenses between England and India. As India was an excessively poor country, the average income of the people being not more than £2 per head per annum, as against £36 per head in this country, he would rather, in case of doubt, turn the scale in favour of India than in favour of this country. He felt bound to say, after the evidence of the futility of previous inquiry, he had not very much hope from the promised inquiry. If a Committee, presided over by such a distinguished expert as Lord Northbrook, ended in nothing, what could be expected from another inquiry? It seemed hopeless, unless a totally different principle were adopted. He did not believe that any good at all would come from the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into Indian matters, unless, placed on that Commission, were Indian representatives, who would be advocates of Indian interests just as other members of the Commission would represent British interests. Two or three capable men, his hon. Friend (Mr. Naoroji) and others, would deal with the subject from an Indian point of view, and then there would be some hope of the conclusions of the Commission being satisfactory. One very painful subject had been alluded to by the hon. Members who moved and seconded the Motion, upon which he could not be altogether silent. He took quite an opposite view as to the policy of the Indian Cantonments Acts, but no humane man could be otherwise than distressed at the outbreaks of disease among our troops in India. Upon this subject we could not stand still, and certainly some great change was called for. He would only throw out a suggestion which occurred to him, and that was that we should change our whole system of recruiting for India, and go back to long service, allowing men to marry and settle in the country, giving them inducement to make homes for themselves. In old days, the long term Army did admirable service, and we might go back to a system of 20 years' service, allow men to marry, keeping them as much as possible at the hill stations, and giving them handsome retiring allowances. The native troops were allowed to marry and were mostly married men, and among them there were not those lamentable outbreaks of disease to which Europeans were exposed. Permission to marry should be given, and those who availed themselves of it would lead wholesome natural lives. He hoped the result of the Debate would lead to the constitution of a Committee or Commission, on lines that would secure an honest handling of difficult Indian questions. If the India Office brought down on the heads of the Commission endless accounts and a confusing mass of figures, the result would be nugatory, and the inquiry had better not be entered upon. Let another plan be adopted—let a small Commission equally represent England and India, and he hoped some good would result.

*SIR A. D. HAYTER (Walsall) said, the idea was conveyed by several speakers in support of the Amendment that India was called upon to pay for soldiers serving in this country. That was liable to great misapprehension. The arrangement made between the India Office and the War Department was that the expenses of the first six months' training of infantry soldiers and the first nine months' training of artillery and cavalry soldiers in this country were charged to India. That was always considered a fair charge, because those recruits were not doing regular and effective duty in this country, but were being trained for regular and effective duty in India. India paid a proportion of the charges for training Artillery officers at Shoeburyness, and Engineer officers at Chatham. She paid some of the charge of the Military Hospital at Netley, for the Discharge Depôt at Gosport, and she repaid the money advanced to pay to soldiers proceeding to India. But the principal charge was for young soldiers training in this country. He thought these were fair charges. However, he congratulated his hon. friend, the Member for Preston, on the fact that he had induced the authorities of the War Office to appoint a Committee to go into the matter. But he warned his hon. friend that it was extremely probable that the result of the Committee's investigation would be against him unless the principle on which the contribution was made by India was altered. He had taken the opportunity of consulting one of the best authorities on this point, namely, the Accountant General of the Army, who was examined upon it by the Committee on Public Accounts in March 1893. The following was part of the Examination :—

> "Is the War Office satisfied with this Capitation rate, as adequate to cover the expenses they are put to?" "We have accepted something about that sum now for some years past; but speaking my personal opinion, I do not think it represents the expense to us of the Indian Depôts." "You think the arrangement leaves the Army Vote a loser?" "I do certainly."

Later on the examination was continued by the Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. Hibbert) :—

> "The Treasury apparently is not satisfied with the existing arrangement by which the amount is settled from year to year?" "The Treasury is disposed, I think, to agree with the War Department, the £7 10s. apart from deferred pay does not quite cover the cost."

By arrangement with the Treasury, the

sum had been accepted up to March 1894; and he did not know what had been done in the year that had since elapsed. But if there was any belief in the minds of the natives of India that too much was charged to India, then the whole basis of the charge ought to be gone into, item by item, until a Committee was satisfied what the proper charge would be.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, no one could fail to understand why these charges were regarded with serious dissatisfaction. He had always understood that the reason why these charges were made was, that the British Army was considered to be to a certain extent kept up for the sake of the Indian Empire; that it was considered as a reserve of the Indian Army, and that in these circumstances the natives of India had no ground of complaint. But a few facts would disprove that hypothesis. The military history of the last 90 years would show that, so far from the English Army being a reserve for the Anglo-Indian forces, the reverse was practically the truth. In the campaigns in the Sutlej and the Punjab, and in the Mutiny, the English Army was held as a reserve for the Indian Army; but the Indian Army was a reserve for the British Army in pretty nearly every war of this century, as in Sir James Beard's Expedition in Egypt in 1801, in the Java Expedition in 1810, in Persia in 1842, in China in 1860, in Abyssinia in 1867, and in the Soudan in 1882. This list successfully disposed of the theory on which these Estimates were framed, that the English Army was kept up as a reserve for the Indian forces. He should like to add how glad he was that the whole charge for the Opium Commission had been placed upon England, and he should have been better pleased if the cost could have been thrown upon the faddists and philosophers, who induced the Government to appoint the Commission.

MR. D. NAOROJI (Finsbury Central) wished to offer his most hearty thanks to the Mover and Seconder of the Motion, and to all who had spoken. The Secretary for War ought to be glad that he had had the opportunity of explaining what he thought the majority of the House did not know. This Debate had given him very great gratification; it would do a great deal of good, not only in India, but in England itself; and it made him glad that Lancashire was waking up. He had been disposed at times, by the proceeedings of the House, to give way to feelings of despair; but this Debate had given him new hope, that this House would be true to its better instincts, to its love of fair play, and would do justice to India. In the account with India, England must remember the immense glory she derived from India. After all, it was a question of large policy; it was whether the natives of India were to be treated as helpless subjects, or whether they were to be regarded as part and parcel of the British Empire, with the rights of British citizenship.

The House divided:— Ayes, 25; Noes, 88.—(Division List, No. 25).

MAJOR DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield) believed that this occasion was one on which remarks might be made on Military policy, and he wished to crave the indulgence of the House while he made a few remarks on War Office reform. It appeared to him that it was quite as important to consider in what direction we should not advance as in what direction we should advance. The Secretary of State for War declared last year that he considered that consolidating and confirming reforms that had already taken place was the true direction in which military reform should proceed. With that view he most thoroughly agreed, and it was in order to express his concurrence with the right hon. Gentleman's attitude that he had risen. He did not think that many hon. Members of the House agreed with that view. He had looked through the speeches made on the Army Estimates during the past few years, and he found that hon. Members generally began by abusing the War Office and by a general vague declaration that the amount of the expenditure on the Army was excessive when compared with the good to be got out of it. No Minister could give a satisfactory reply to statements so vague. The next stage was to give certain definite instances of inefficiency. One hon. Member alluded to the fact that the reserve was inefficient, another to the fact that the cavalry was underhorsed; but, in order to put these details right, great expenditure was invariably necessary. These hon. Gentlemen declared that they were not prepared to spend sixpence more on the Army, and, in order to get themselves out of the difficulty, spoke loudly of War Office administration and War Office responsibility. Was there any use in this kind of oratory? In every single one of these stages failures were to be found, and he would like briefly to point out where, as it seemed to him, the chief errors of this kind of declamation were to be found. Hon. Members, when they spoke like this, always had in their minds some reference to foreign armies; but to compare foreign armies, under a system of conscription and with no Colonial service, to our Army, in which more than half the men were abroad, and in which the voluntary system held, was perfectly useless. If an hon. Member would bring forward a resolution in favour of conscription he ought to have a fair hearing; but until that was done all comparisons with foreign armies were useless. What other proof was there in favour of these sweeping declarations as to the inefficiency of the Army. He confessed he knew of none whatever. If one looked carefully through the Army Estimates, he would come to the conclusion that the only possible way in which we could get a greater number of men would be by reducing the pay either of officers or men. The pay of the man was little more than 22s. a week, including his housing, his military education, his clothes, and transport all over the world. Therefore, it was impossible to make any economy in the pay of the soldier. Neither could any reduction be made in the pay of the officers, inasmuch as the greater number of officers were of junior rank, and their pay was very small. Of course, under the Estimates they might, here and there, get a few thousand pounds saved, but that would not be enough to remove the charge of excessive expenditure; and the only logical conclusion those hon. Members who called out for a reduction in expenditure could come to was, that the number of men should be reduced. They failed, however, to recognise that England was little more than a huge depot for foreign service. The only way in which to reduce the Army was by adopting some great change in foreign policy. We might, for instance, abandon Malta. That was a policy he should object to; but it was the only kind of proposal that could be made if an economy in military expenditure was to be effected. Another common thing was to compare the expenditure on the Army with that on the Navy. The expenditure on the Army was some 30 millions. and on the Navy about 19 millions, and it was said that, inasmuch as the Navy was the far more important of the two, these figures must be wrong. The value of a service, however, could not be compared to its cost. He supposed that a good many hon. Members would declare that Education was far more important than the Army and Navy together; but no one would propose to reduce the Military and Naval Votes on that account. Relative importance could not be compared with relative expenditure. Again, the Army and the Navy, although parts of our defensive system, were separate parts, and an increase in Naval expenditure would not bring about a decrease in Military expenditure. The Army was absolutely necessary for the defence of the British Empire, however powerful the Navy was made. He, for one, believed that if there was any increased expenditure it should be for the Navy rather than for the Army; but that must not be pushed too far. Although we were content to remain a Military nonentity in Europe, we still remained the greatest Military Power in Asia. It might be true that there were not enough manœuvres, that the cavalry was under-forced, that our recruits were too young. But in considering these matters, they must weigh against the advantages to be gained by an increased military expenditure, the disadvantages of increased civil taxation. Then if they were to spend 10 millions more upon the Army the same complaints that were heard now would before very long be heard again, and the Army would demand more and more expenditure. He was not convinced that a much greater military expenditure would be justifiable; but, on the other hand, he did not think that they ought to reduce the existing force in the least. Could they find a panacea for their existing troubles in some form of War Office reorganisation? He had come to the conclusion that they could not. That was not the means by which to make an advance. He had served, himself, in a military capacity in the War Office, and at first he shared the belief that that institution was a mass of stupidity. But the longer he remained there the more he became convinced that it was the inherent difficulties of the problems that presented themselves that prevented their solution. The blunders that occurred did not occur in consequence of exceptional stupidity, but in consequence of the exceptional difficulties of the problems that had to be faced. There had been a number of eminent soldiers and civilians at the War Office, and it was absurd to suppose that they could have left it in the state in which it was often represented to be. The system at the War Office was fairly good. They would probably find it impossible to devise a system of War Office administration which should be much superior to that perfected by the late Mr. Stanhope, who hardly received the credit that was due for the work which he did in the Department. Several gentlemen who had served at the War Office considered that many of the main proposals of the Hartington Commission pointed in the wrong direction. The Commission was wrong, for example, in proposing to group the different military departments in the Office under a civil head, for the departments were kept together better under a military head. He did not think that much would be gained by adopting the recommendations of the Commission, and he congratulated the Secretary of State for War on his fearless determination not to effect any of these changes in the system of administration at the War Office. He should like, however, to indicate two or three directions in which reform could be pushed. They ought to peg away at minor reforms in the army, and, in order that they might be effected, public attention ought to be fixed on military affairs. The suggestion of the leader of the Opposition that there should be a Committee of the Cabinet associated with military officers, and having permanent records, was an excellent suggestion, which would, he hoped, be adopted. Then there ought to be more publicity in connection with military affairs. When he was at the Intelligence Department certain maps were kept secret in the most absurd way, and they would have been useful to the civil population. The love of secrecy was a little weakness of the Authorities. He also urged that the Secretary of State for War would do well to publish the signed Reports of the heads of the Military Departments, in order that the public might know what was their real opinion as to the efficiency of the Army. It would also be advantageous if the right hon. Gentleman could proceed with his policy of decentralisation. If they were ever to reduce the non-effective vote so as to increase the effective vote, it must be done by diminishing pensions. The only way to diminish pensions was by reducing the proportion of junior officers in the Army, and the only way to do that was by introducing the 4 company system in our battalions. He had always thought that we ought to maintain one battalion permanently abroad and one permanently at home, with a draft going out every year, the home battalion being kept at one uniform strength. He mentioned these possible reforms to show that in many directions they ought to advance, and could do so. He wished in conclusion to point out that by discussing the question of War Office reform, they were merely drawing a red herring across the trail of military reforms.

LORD STANLEY (Lancashire, S.E., Westhoughton) called attention to the bad drainage of the Tower barracks and Wellington barracks. In consequence of the present defective drainage system at these places, the health and lives of the men with whom he served were endangered. Before 1891 the drainage at the Tower was found to be about as bad as it could be. A very good scheme was then prepared by a Mr. Tyndall, and it was ordered to be undertaken by the engineers. The work was done and it was passed by the engineer officers as perfect. But some 18 months ago some slight defects were discovered near the Quartermaster's house, and the drains were taken up and found to be in nearly as bad a state as the old drains were a year previously. They were ordered to be repaired, and the Secretary for War had told him the other day in answer to a question, that the defects discovered had been remedied.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Were being remedied.

LORD STANLEY: At the rate they were going on, at the end of the century they would still be being remedied ("Yes."). He did not want to abuse any officer in particular, but some notice ought to be taken of the conduct of the engineer officer who in 1891 and 1892 supervised the laying down of the drains and afterwards reported them to be in a perfect condition, and who, by his carelessness or inability, had endangered the health of those living in those barracks. In Wellington barracks the sanitary condition of the officers' quarters was infinitely worse than the men's, for the reason that in the former the drains were close to the building, whereas in the men's barracks the drains coming from the latrines were some distance away. In answer to a question put in the House, the Secretary of State informed him that the plans of the drains at Wellington barracks, and the others, were sufficiently good for the purpose. He should be inclined to say the plans were absolutely useless. He knew, himself, there was in Wellington barracks, in the officers' quarters, a drain found the other day of which the engineers had no knowledge whatever, and no tracing of it on their plans. The Financial Secretary, in answer to a question, informed him that the usual quarterly inspection of drains was made, and that no further examination was thought to be necessary. Probably the hon. Gentleman did not know what the usual inspection of the engineer officer was. He tapped the pipe, said that it was perfectly sound, asked if there was any smell about, and walked out of the barracks. On the last occasion, however, the usual quarterly inspection was a little more careful than usual. The smoke-test was applied, with a signally successful result, for it prevented at least three officers from going into their rooms for several hours afterwards. [Laughter.] The smoke poured in. This was no laughing matter for the officers who had to live in them. Two officers within the last year had had typhoid fever, one of them in his own regiment. [MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN dissented). Oh yes! he would give the name—Second-Lieutenant Cochrane, of the First Battalion Grenadier Guards. Of course the medical officers would say he did not contract it there. They always did. He had had typhoid fever in one of the barracks in Dublin, Undoubtedly he contracted it there, but the Medical Officers thought differently. And they always did. The fact was they put to supervise the drainage system of our barracks men who could not—and it was not to be expected of them—have the sanitary knowledge which they ought to have for such a special and arduous duty. They should allow the sanitary inspectors of the district to have equal power inside the barracks to what they had outside. He observed the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State make rather a face at that. He knew perfectly well he would be told they ought not to have civilian interference with the military authorities, but why should they not enable the sanitary inspector of the district to come in and see the state of the barracks? He had known cases where the officers had themselves reported things were bad, but the answer to every demand was, "There is no money. The Treasury won't let us have any." If the sanitary inspector came into his house and said, "Your house is in a bad sanitary condition," and he replied, "I have no money," that would not absolve him. He was still serving in the regiment whose case he had brought forward. They felt very much indeed the neglect with which their case had been met, though not by the right hon. Gentleman, but he would beg him to ask some of the lower authorities to give their reports, and he would see that the state of the barracks was not what he was given to understand it was.

MAJOR RASCH agreed that they ought not to be too hard on the engineer officers, who, after all, were their fellow-creatures. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on his re-appearance, and also on the more or less satisfactory character of the report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting. It was germane to that report to allude to the subject of the employment of discharged and reserve soldiers. There were 35,000 men required annually for the Army, but the Inspector-General had only been able to obtain

27,000 of the regulation height or chest measurement. The Inspector-General also reported that 25 per cent. of the total number of recruits for the past year were specials, and not men who came up to the regulation standard. The Government wanted to get an article, but they did not desire to pay the proper price for it. In obtaining recruits it was unnecessary to give them an extra quarter-pound of meat, or a full shilling per day, but what was necessary was that young men should have some guarantee that on leaving the ranks they would be able to obtain employment. That was precisely what they did not get in the British Army, but what they did get in the Continental armies and also in America. But when a man was discharged from the British Army he was sent from his business to starve on sixpence a day, he drifted into the ranks of the unemployed, and he became a standing terror to recruiting all over the country. There were several methods by which this state of things might be improved. He had, on previous occasions, suggested that there should be a bureau at the War Office charged with finding employment for discharged and Reserve soldiers, in addition to the two associations—one civilian and the other connected with the Army—which already existed for this purpose. These two associations were supported by voluntary contributions; last year they found employment for 1,400 men, but considering the fact that something like 30,000 were discharged from the Army in one year, there seemed ample scope for such a bureau as he had indicated. Then there was the Post Office. The Member for Manchester, who was Postmaster-General in the late Government, very wisely suggested that the Post Office should, wherever possible, give employment, in preference, to discharged and Reserve soldiers. He very much regretted that the present Postmaster-General seemed to have allowed that very good practice to lapse. Again, many soldiers were employed as clerks, military police, officers' servants, and cooks. Why could not the right hon. Gentleman adopt a plan by which all work of this character might be performed by men belonging to the Reserves, so that efficient soldiers should not be deducted from the strength of the Army? He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on the suggestion he had made in his statement about the increase in the Royal Artillery. He thought the most foolish and effete step the late Unionist Government ever took was that of reducing the Royal Artillery, and taking their horses to form a military train. He was glad to see that the Royal Artillery were to be increased. He also congratulated the right hon. Gentleman upon putting his foot down on the absurd frequent movement of troops from one and of the country to the other, which seemed to him a stupid practice that was only carried out to justify the existence of clerks in the Quartermaster-General's department. The Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day, in the Debate upon agricultural matters said he thanked God that prices were so low. In that case why could not the Secretary for War take advantage of the cheapness of food to increase the soldier's rations to the extent of $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. per meat and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of bread additional each day? By so doing he would greatly add to his popularity with the Army. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give his best attention to the points he had ventured to place before him.

MR. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye) observed that the right hon. Gentleman, in answering any possible criticism, upon the present organisation of the Army, occupied an unusually strong position. It could not be said against him, for instance, that when he was in opposition he ever advocated any decentralisation, or indeed any reform of the present military system, and afterwards, when in Office, adopted a different policy. The right hon. Gentleman had always been a champion of two perfectly consistent views—that no great change was desirable in their present military system, and that the home Army was not meant for fighting purposes, but only to supply Indian drafts and to furnish occasional expeditionary forces in times of warfare. With regard to the question of War Office administration it was generally admitted that in most matters of administration, decentralisation, as far as possible, was a desirable aid. He thought it was expedient to leave people and things to take care of themselves so far as it was prudent and safe to do so, and not to harass the central authority with a number of petty, irritating details. At the present moment the War Office was conspicuous amongst all other Departments of the State as being the most congested, over-centralised institution that they had, while there were special reasons why decentralisation was more desirable there than in any other Department of the State. They had in the War Office, the Parliamentary, the Financial and the Military Executive all crowded together under one roof. Personal experience with regard to the War Office showed that if a small matter had to be decided it was invariably submitted to a great person, and if a great matter had to be decided it was apt to be submitted to a very little person. In other words, they had such a confused assemblage of very great and very small administrators there, that the duties were transacted in a very confusing and irritating manner. The Military Department was undoubtedly that which was the most over-centralised, and he wondered, year after year, what justification the right hon. Gentleman found not only for ignoring the recommendations of the Hartington Commission, but what must also have been conveyed to him by his advisers on military subjects as to the great need of effective reform at headquarters. One reform most needed at the War Office should take place at the top, and constitutional and loyal, but effectual, means should be found to put in force the system of old age retirement as regarded the highest, as well as the lowest ranks in the Army. It was rather curious that it should have been left to an humble private Member on his side of the House to advocate this reform. One would have thought it would naturally have occurred to the mind of the right hon. Gentleman many years ago. But he remembered that in 1890 the right hon. Gentleman, in a Memorandum he appended to the Report of the Hartington Commission, took up an attitude of dogged resistance to any effective reform of the kind to which he referred.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon, I took up no attitude of resistance, dogged or otherwise, to anything of the kind. The one thing I objected to was the particular proposal as to the creation of a Chief of the Staff.

MR. BROOKFIELD said, he would withdraw the word "dogged," but he was under the impression that, at all events, the right hon. Gentleman dissented in the Memorandum to the view he was endeavouring now to indicate. He remembered that the right hon. Gentleman first said that the kernel of the Report was the recommendation as to Counsel and expert advisers, but when it came to the point of appointing a Chief of the Staff—in other words, of making a great change in the office of the Commander-in-chief, he did take up an attitude of absolute resistance—a Tory attitude, and he could pay the right hon. Gentleman no higher compliment than that. Well, five years had passed since then; men sometimes in that period grew wiser as well as older, and he should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he adhered to the opinions he expressed in 1890—opinions which were in opposition to those of the leading military authorities of the present day. There was a minor point intimately connected with the other, in that same Memorandum, in regard to which the right hon. Gentleman seemed to show a more open mind. It was as to the desirability of appointing a general officer to command the English Army at home, in the same way as a general officer commanded the two Armies in India and Ireland respectively—that was to say, free from the perpetual intervention of the War Office. He was not aware that the Indian Army or the Army in Ireland, was less efficient than the one administered from Pall Mall, which was the constant subject of criticism. He would suggest that a very large devolution of duties might take place, by which this general officer might be made independent, so far as any officer might be said to be independent, of the War Office especially, in minor details of executive duty. Furthermore, he thought that a great deal of devolution of duties might take place to the general officers commanding the different military districts, and he believed that the result of such a step in efficiency would be very considerable. In the Memorandum to which he had already referred, the right hon. Gentleman said, although we had no military policy, that it was our duty to consider some of those minor problems of Army administration, which could alone constitute our military policy. It was his desire that those minor problems should be considered. The right hon. Gentleman had been congratulated on having reduced the number of moves. But that policy should be carried out in its entirety, and if the right hon. Gentleman would agree to make the Army a great deal more stationary than at present, it would not only affect a very great saving to the taxpayer, but it would conduce very much to the general efficiency of our Military system. He suggested that the home battalions should be confined a great deal more to the territorial centres to which they belonged, and that the large sums voted for transport should, in some cases, at least, as an experiment, be spent in adapting the existing barracks at the different depôt centres to the accommodation of the whole battalion belonging to the district. One very strong reason in favour of this somewhat novel proposal, was that it would be very popular with the rank and file of the Army. The Royal Marines was probably the most popular corps with that class from which recruits were drawn; and he believed the reason was, because the men knew that, at the end of their term of foreign service, they would return to what had become their home, where they would find their friends and relations, and where their chances of obtaining civil employment would be proportionately increased. Again, in connection with the territorial system, he would express his astonishment that no definite steps were taken for connecting the officers of the different regiments with the localities to which they belonged by birth and sentiment. The officers of the Militia were still invariably thus connected with the men whom they have to command. With regard to the Secretary of State's Memorandum, he expressed his sincere regret that, in a document which purported being only a compendium for handy reference, the right hon. Gentleman should have gone out of his way to refer to the possible withdrawal of troops from Egypt. He thought the moment chosen for this reference was particularly inopportune, and, taken side by side with another extraordinary utterance of a Member of the Government on the subject of Cyprus, the statement would create an erroneous impression abroad. It would encourage the French and the Khedive in a policy which he did not think this country would tolerate, and would raise hopes which, he believed, the country would take care were never fulfilled. Turning to a more pleasant matter, he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman very sincerely on the enormous increase that had taken place in the Army Reserve, and upon our having a force of 85,000 men on whom to depend. He would ask hon. Members who conscientiously disliked the Short Service system, and who were most severe on "attenuated home battalions," to lay to heart this result of the Short Service system, and realise that each of these poor battalions had some 700 or 800 old soldiers on whom to depend. His only difficulty was as to what the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Lichfield would make of this large force—this respectable nucleus for even a European army. The existence of this large reserve itself furnished the best answer to any suggestion as to our never having the will or the power to take part in any European dispute. However decided the right hon. Gentleman and his friends might be upon making the Home Army only a nursery for the supply of the Indian Army, it could not be disputed that circumstances might arise at any time which would necessitate our resuming the *rôle* that we had always filled in the past. He had desired to go into some other questions of military policy, especially relating to the Militia and Volunteers; but, remembering the circumstances under which the Secretary for War appeared in the House that evening after a considerable interval, he would only say that he would defer those observations until another opportunity. He had made these remarks in the interest of the Army and of the country, which would look to that Army in the time of need.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) thought there was a great deal of truth in the remarks of the last speaker on the subject of sanitation. He took a great interest in the subject of sanitation of barracks. He thought they heard very little of the sufferings of men afflicted with blood-poisoning diseases, through having to inhabit insanitary barracks. The Royal Engineers had, he thought, a very difficult office to perform, and he thought that the permanent works in connection with barracks at home should be placed under some Board competent to deal with questions relating to them. It would, in his opinion, be as absurd to expect the officers of the Royal Engineers to control contractors and contractors' foremen in questions of sanitation, as to expect Army medical officers to be specialists in eyesight or some special branch of the medical profession. He thought that it would be in the interest of the Army at large if the particular branch of the War Office to which he had alluded were to have the advice of some special Board to inspect the barracks throughout the country in order to make certain that the drainage was up to that in well-regulated private houses in this country.

*SIR G. CHESNEY, in supporting the Motion, said he was in favour of Army decentralisation, and wished to press it upon Her Majesty's Government. He thought the time was not inappropriate to press the question of Army organisation, although it had been said that the British people were not able to think of more than one subject at a time, and he quite admitted that the Navy was much the more important question at the present. At any rate, the country was spending about an equally immense sum on the Army as on the Navy. But there was remarkable difference between the two cases. A warship—whether in peace or war time—was always what it was called—a man-of-war. Wherever it went, it was complete in every respect. It was a complete unit in itself, and was ready at all times, whether by itself, or in company with other warships, to go into battle at a few hours' notice. So far as it went they had in the Navy a complete and perfect war machine, but in regard to the Army, the facts were quite different, and the first impression gained from the perusal of the interesting statements accompanying the Army Estimates was that the Army was designed for purposes of peace. They were told, with pardonable gratification, that it might be found possible to withdraw one battalion of Infantry from Egypt, and that in consequence they would he able to reinforce certain small stations on the West Coast of Africa. What would they think of a Memorandum in the German Army, pointing out, as an important operation, that it was found possible to transfer a battalion of Infantry from the Baltic to the Rhine? The Estimates, as a whole, were redolent of peace, and he thought the country had a right to ask, what did they get for the £18,000,000? The backbone of the Army was the Infantry. If they left out the Army in India, which was not included in the Estimates, they had an Establishment of 89,000. But of that number a very considerable portion was stationed abroad, at various ports, which would require to be reinforced on the outbreak of war. These posts, therefore were not a source of strength, but of weakness. It was also stated that, of the Infantry at home, most of the battalions had between 300 and 400 men in them over 20 years of age. This meant in fact that the effective strength of men who could take the field, was about 25,000. That, then, was the element for offensive purposes of the British Army, irrespective of the Cavalry and Artillery. He was speaking quite within the mark when he said that they could not collect, in the event of war, and put into the field, more than 25,000 men. Then, what had they for defensive purposes? They had the Militia, the Yeomanry, and the Volunteers. Therefore, if this country desired to embark in offensive operations, they might assume that they would have to create an Army *de novo* wherewith to do it. That, he thought, was a very accurate statement. Some one had asked: "What about the Reserves?" Yes, they had 80,000 men there, and he heartily congratulated the War Minister on this force having reached such a large number. The total, he believed, was 85,000; but do not let it be supposed that these 85,000 men were available in the mass to strengthen these attenuated Home battalions. Nothing of the kind. In the first place, on the outbreak of war, they would have to strengthen their garrisons in different parts of the world, to avoid their being captured by the enemy. It might be said that it was the duty of the Fleet to guard these outlying stations. ["Hear, hear!"] Notwithstanding that cheer, he ventured to say that if the business of the Fleet was diverted from its proper purpose—namely, to find out the enemy and defeat it—and frittered away in guarding the Colonies, the whole object of the Navy, and all chance of vigorous action, would be lost. A great many men would, therefore, have to be sent at once abroad. Then they had to consider the case of India. They had a fine Army in India, perfectly equipped and ready for service, but it was an Army entirely on a peace footing. It had no Reserves on the spot, neither native nor British. Nor could they strengthen the native portion materially unless the British Army was strengthened simultaneously. The present establishment of the Indian Army was so small that, whenever they had to send a moderate force on a frontier expedition, they had to set in motion the whole Indian Army. If they had opposed to them, not Afghans or Burmese, but a European foe on the frontier, they would have to largely reinforce the Indian Army, so that any portion of the Reserves not required for Home service would, unquestionably, be required for India. Therefore, he came back to this, that, on the outbreak of war, they would have available an Army of about 25,000 men. This was the outcome of an annual expenditure of 18 millions sterling. Was the country going to be satisfied, in the case of invasion, or of threatened invasion, with its defence by Volunteers and Militia? It was said that we possessed in the fleet the means of defending our shores; but if the fleet was occupied on the outbreak of war defending our shores against invasion it would not be fulfilling the proper duty for which it was designed—namely, to search for the enemy, to pursue it, and to defeat it wherever found. It was monstrous that this country should even tolerate the idea of the possibility of invasion, but he was afraid that they would have to familiarise themselves with the idea owing to the defective character of our present military establishment. It was the knowlege of the weakness of England as a military Power, both for offence and defence, that in his belief was the one disquieting element in the military situation of the world. This country was so rich; it had so many weak points in its armour that attack would inflict upon it an enormous amount of damage. No doubt they all felt gratitude to and pride in our Volunteer force, but he had heard this point raised, which was worthy of consideration. He had heard it said—how unfair, how unjust to the Volunteers during peace time that those men, who are undertaking at their own cost and time the business of volunteering, should be called upon to take upon themselves also in war time the defence of the country. Why should the Volunteers be called upon to undertake this duty more than other persons? When that question was asked there was only one answer. It was a discredit to the country that our defence should depend on the voluntary services of those who were patriotic enough to come forward, while all those who were too selfish to do so should escape a share in the burden of defence. With our Army in its present condition the first necessary step was that every able-bodied citizen should be required to take his share in the defence of the country, either by joining the Militia or the Volunteers. If this step was taken then there would be an end to the discreditable scares which arose at intervals. The additional cost would be small, and the Government might largely reduce the expenditure on the regular Army. Until some such policy as this was adopted the country would not be in a position either of safety or of credit. Some persons spoke as if war was never likely to come, that by some happy chance we were always to be free from the risks and complications of European war. But we were living in perhaps the most warlike period that the world had ever seen. He remembered being in Paris just before the outbreak of the war of 1870; and if anyone had listened at that time, not only to "the man in the street," but to the most qualified persons occupying the highest military positions, the idea of invasion or of disaster was completely scouted. The French looked upon their army as a perfect machine, capable of meeting and of overcoming any enemy. Everyone now knew what was the result of that confident feeling. Because the event had not yet happened, therefore, were we to be more justified than the unfortunate French people in our belief? France recovered from that great catastrophe which overtook her by reason of her homogeneous people and her rich soil to fall back upon. On the other hand, our wealth depended on much more complicated, delicate, and varied circumstances. If a blow such as France reeled under was inflicted upon us, the greatness of England and its prosperity might pass away for ever. Therefore, it was surely incumbent on the House and on the Government seriously to consider those possibilities, and not to pass them as the mere outpourings of agitation. He did not advocate the spending of one penny more on the Army; he would much rather prefer to cut down the unnecessary, wasteful expenditure at present going on. He maintained that the Army at present was conducted on most extravagant lines. All over the world they found costly establishments of Generals and Staffs without any troops, while at Head-quarters there was an enormously overgrown Establishment, which was the creation of a monstrously over-centralised system. If they could get rid of this, there would be more money than at present to develop the Volunteer and the Militia forces. When proposals of this kind were made they would, no doubt, be resisted, and plausible reasons advanced why no action should be taken; but, as a practical way of dealing with the question, he advocated as the first step, the giving of greater publicity to the business of the War Department. If the Estimates were referred, for example, to a select and well-chosen Committee, who could consult the principal officers concerned, and ascertain their way of doing business, they would find, among other things, that no one was really responsible at present for economy in military expenditure. The evidence given before the Commission of 1888, of which Lord R. Churchill was chairman, showed that there was only one person at the War Office who was deemed to be responsible for keeping down expenditure, and that was the Accountant General, who admitted that he had no particular knowledge of the military organisation of the Continental Armies, and that he acted on the principle of objecting to expenditure generally, rather than by pressing for administrative reform. The military officers consulted seemed to think that all they could get was so much to the good, and that it was not their business to suggest economy. If the Estimates were carefully examined by those competent to deal with them, and able to call for the opinions of those concerned in framing the Estimates, the House would find that large economies would result, and that a much more efficient system might be adopted. He did not blame present or past Ministers for the state of affairs. The truth was, that, overworked as Ministers were, and elaborate as was the business of a great Department, it would require almost a superhuman effort to undertake a great administrative reform. But if the Ministers were supported by public opinion, and the publicity which would attend such an inquiry as he had suggested, then he would be encouraged to reorganise the War Office on principles of efficiency and economy.

*Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) called attention to the question of the employment of Reserve men. He referred to a passage in the Report of the Inspector General of Recruiting, which stated that the best way of opening out State employment to ex-soldiers was to give the assurance that a certain percentage of vacancies in each Department should be reserved for Army men. This plan, he thought, was wholly insufficient to deal with the case. It would not be too much to say that in every public Department all the offices which could be filled by Army or Navy men ought to be open to them. Why should these places be filled by the coachmen and butlers of Ministers and politicians? Unfortunately at the present time the Post Office seemed not to be doing as much in making provision for old Army and Navy men as might be. More thorough dealing with the question was necessary. He gathered from the summary which the Secretary of State for War had issued that it was intended during the present year to serve out the Lee-Metford rifle to the Militia. What provision in that event was to be made for ranges on which the Militia could receive proper instructions in firing the rifle? Next, as to the regulations of canteens in temporary Volunteer camps. There were three modes of providing this requisite. Originally the general method was to arrange for a week with some licensed victualler to lend his licence; but that plan had its objections, because it generally happened that the Volunteers went into camp at the time of some public holiday, when the best licensed victuallers had enough to do without going into camp. The second method was to take out a temporary licence; but many Volunteer Corps thought it was better to establish a canteen on what was called the "club" system. The corps to which he belonged went into camp last year, and established a canteen on that footing, and a summons for infringement of the Licensing Laws followed, in which doubt was thrown upon the legality of a club canteen. What happened on these occasions was that the astute excise officer did not scruple to act as an *agent provocateur*. He disguised himself as a *bona-fide* traveller, and tried to get a drink on the strength of that assurance. If he failed, he hung about the camp, and having got hold of some recruit, described himself as tired and thirsty, and perhaps succeeded in inducing the recruit to get him a glass of beer. He thought some distinct regulation should be laid down, and he believed the best plan would be to have a clause put into the Army Annual Act. If that could not be done he would ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider whether the law on the subject was perfectly clear. He had read a statement made by the Solicitor to the War Office, which did not favour the view that it was perfectly clear. He thought they had a right to ask the War Office to issue some directions to enable officers to know in what way they could safely and satisfactorily establish a canteen.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University) said, the Short Service System and the deferred pay might be an excellent thing for the Army, but it was inflicting a very serious evil on the civil population of the country. At present they turned a man out of the Army at 25 years of age and did not teach him any trade. The discipline and the barrack life, which were good enough as long as he remained under the colours, very much unfitted a man for civil employment, and, worst of all, when he was turned out thus, without a trade, he was given about £20, which he had an opportunity of immediately spending. The effect, there was no doubt whatever, was that a very undue proportion of the inmates of the casual wards were discharged soldiers. There was some remarkable testimony to that effect in a report made on the Whitechapel casual ward, which would be very shortly made public. The effect of the evidence which was taken by an individual examination of all those who frequented the casual ward for two months was that no less than 22 per cent. of all the men who frequented it this winter admitted themselves to be discharged soldiers. A longer period than two months was not taken, because it was found that at the end of that time the same men came over again. In the opinion of the experienced officers and those who were qualified experts the proportion was really much greater than even 22 per cent. He had heard exactly the same testimony given before the Labour Commission by the officer who had charge of the Chelsea labour registry, who stated that a very undue proportion of the persons out of work in Chelsea, and who were seeking work, were discharged soldiers; and he said it was extremely difficult to get men of that class anything to do, because they had learnt no trade in the Army. These men were not like discharged sailors—handy men—and it was almost impossible for them to get employment. This was really a very grave and growing evil, and he thought the Secretary of State for War was very much indebted to the hon. and gallant Member for South-East Essex for pressing this matter on his attention, because it was one with which the War Office in some way or other ought to deal. Many of the men, he dared say, were very respectable, and used the sum of money given them to settle themselves in life, but a very considerable proportion, there was no doubt, squandered the money in a very short time, and were then utterly disqualified for taking their place in civil life. Could not the Secretary of State for War invent some other mode of giving this deferred pay? It might be given in instalments, or it might be applied to the purchase of an old-age pension, or given in such a manner as would not pauperise the recipient.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said the right hon. Gentleman did not often take part in these Debates, or he would know that this question had been often discussed, though he did not think it had frequently been mentioned with more clearness, sympathy, and good sense. So far as concerned the number of old soldiers and others out of employment, he was rather under the impression that the great majority were not Reserve men, but men who had completed their 12 years' service with the Colours and in the Reserve, because, so far as investigation went by paying officers and others who had knowledge of Reservists, information did not confirm the fact that the actual number of men who were in workhouses, or in demoralising and degrading circumstances, was such as was sometimes asserted. Of course as soon as a man completed his 12 years' service trace of him was lost, and there was no knowledge of what became of him. But one answer to all that had been said by the hon. and gallant Member for South-east Essex (Major Rasch), the right hon. Gentleman (Sir John Gorst), and others, was that a Committee of the House was sitting to consider this subject, a Committee to inquire into the question of Employment for Reserve and Discharged Soldiers, which sat for a short time last Session, and had been re-appointed. So really discussion had been very much in the nature of a waste of time, because, from the labours of that Committee, might be expected much fuller information. He might add that, being himself, and to his own discomfort to some extent, Chairman of a Committee in relation to Distress arising from Non-employment, he had been told there would be evidence forthcoming before the Committee on this subject, and he hoped the House and the Department would soon be better qualified to come to some conclusion on the matter. A good deal of misapprehension had been expressed by hon. Gentlemen who had complained of a practice of appointing butlers and footmen as messengers in Government Departments. He could assure hon. Members no such appointments were made at the War Office or the Admiralty now. There was no particular objection to butlers, but they were generally men who had, at all events, opportunity for providing for themselves in an honest way, and it seemed unnecessary to pass over in their favour men who, in one way or other, had served their country. Then it had been said that less was being done by the Post Office for Reserve men than formerly, but that was an entire mistake. His right hon. Friend (Mr. Arnold Morley) assured him that rather more was being done, and his desire was to do all that could be done in that direction. Before this question was raised, there was a long speech by his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Oxford. He, coming back to his country, looked around him, and everything was the "abomination of desolation;" everything was wrong. Not to undervalue his hon. and gallant Friend's great experience, and, least of all, his great acuteness, was he not really a little too summary in his condemnation? The present system had not been put together in a hap-hazard manner by stupid or ill-informed people, but the best minds, civil and military, had, during the last 20 years, been brought to bear upon it. The hon. and gallant Gentleman, for instance, alluded to Mr. Knox, the Accountant General for the War Office, and put him aside, as of little consequence, an advocate of economy perhaps; but he knew nothing of the matter, and he thought the hon. and gallant Gentleman said, Mr. Knox was not a reformer.

*SIR G. CHESNEY said, the right hon. Gentleman rather misrepresented him. He spoke, not from his own knowledge of Mr. Knox, but quoted from Mr. Knox's own evidence, in which he said he had not studied the systems of foreign armies.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Mr. Knox was a modest man, and he had to be careful what he said when he came before a Committee, because he was not altogether his own master. He was responsible to others and must not make observations reflecting on them. But to know him, as many Members could say, was to know one of the most intelligent, one of the best informed men, one of the most reforming spirits in the Service. He (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) had known very distinguished gallant officers of high position when asked some question of some detail of military organisation or discipline, and being a little at a loss say, "Wait a minute, ring the bell, we'll get it from Knox." This gentleman must not suffer in estimation because with characteristic modesty he spoke of himself in a deprecatory manner. The hon. and gallant Member said we had no home Army and no foreign Army, that the Army in India was good enough, but that it had no reserves for India or Home. He did not know whether the hon. and gallant Gentleman would locate a large reserve force for the British Army in India; there would be some difficulty about it. But really the hon. and gallant Gentleman seemed to wish to renew the old, old story of Army reform, but he must at his time of life decline to follow his hon. and gallant Friend into that maze. These things were settled. His hon. and gallant Friend fell back on their old friend Conscription. But he would have to wait a little before such a proposal was introduced or accepted. Nothing was more easy than to find fault with or pick holes in a system like ours. Decentralisation, said his hon. and gallant Friend, would put an end to wasteful expenditure; let them "combine efficiency with economy"—as if anybody had ever thought of doing anything else. His hon. and gallant Friend behind him had spoken of this as being like "that blessed word, Mesopotamia"—so grateful to the feelings of those who used it. When an hon. Member talked about sound common-sense and business-like arrangements and a statesmanlike policy, these were mere words and meant nothing. What they wanted was that they should point to anything necessary to be done, and the War Department would see whether it could be done. Take decentralisation. He frankly and boldly stated that he was as much in favour of it as anyone, but everything could not be decentralised; there must be a limit somewhere. A pretty strict control could be exercised even with greater centralisation than now existed. The hon. and gallant Member for Essex had referred to his postscript to the report of the Hartington Commission. He could not accept his description of that postscript, or the inferences he drew from that erroneous description. His views were plain. He entirely agreed with his colleagues on the Commission in all the main points of their recommendations. The main thing he disagreed with them about was the appointment of an officer apart from the ordinary military executive, to be shut up in a room by himself in order that he might think, and there he was to manufacture a military policy for the country; and he said they did not want a military policy if it meant aggression or opposition to our neighbours. We were a peaceful country, and our military policy was on a humble scale. The hon. and gallant Member spoke of "leading military authorities" condemning something or other. The great difficulty was to get a body of opinion in favour of one thing more than another. So phrases like that, though they might sound very awful, had no terrors for him. The hon. Member for Preston alluded to the subject of canteens. He himself had nothing to add to what he said earlier in the day. But he would give it his best consideration. Then the hon. Member deplored the fact that there was a great deficiency of officers in the Volunteers. All sorts of suggestions were made to overcome this—that they should cover them with medals, give them commissions in the Army, raise their pay, and give them equipment.

Coming to the noble Lord opposite, he was a remarkable instance of heredity. While he was speaking he closed his eyes, and almost thought his father, who was so well known and popular in the House, was addressing them. He complained of the state of the drains at the Tower and the Wellington Barracks. If there was anything he himself had served an apprenticeship in, it was drains. He served that apprenticeship when he had the honour of being Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the locality of his service and knowledge was the Phœnix Park, Dublin. He was certain that whatever the drains and cesspools in the Tower or the Wellington Barracks might be, they were a mere trifle compared with what existed, in his time, in the Chief Secretary's lodge. But the noble Lord's complaint about the Tower was reasonable. The drains there were of the oldest type of construction. The drains of the Tower, as might be expected, were of the very oldest description, but they were reconstructed two years ago. It was believed that the main drains were well laid, but the communications were imperfectly laid, which, as every one knew from private experience, was often the case, and accordingly some mischief arose from them. A thorough inspection of them was made, and they were now in process of being restored. He would answer for it that those drains would not be passed as right until they were proved to be right to the satisfaction of a sanitary engineer. A good deal had been said about the Royal Engineers; but, apart from the skill, the knowledge, the capacity, and the training of the Royal Engineers themselves, there was at the headquarters of the Service Mr. Tyndall, one of the best sanitary experts he had ever come across. They could have a sanitary expert who would lead them into every sort of expense, and that for a public department like the War Office would be a very awkward thing. On the other hand, a sanitary expert, if he were a sensible and reasonable man, would be invaluable in such a department; and he could say that Mr. Tyndall had been given a somewhat improved position in the department, and was in charge of the question of barrack sanitation. All that he had said on a former occasion about plans was that in certain barracks the plans were believed to be good, and that in the older barracks they were sufficient for practical purposes. "Sufficient" was his own word. The word presented to him was "reliable," but he thought it well to use "sufficient" instead. What was meant was that in the case of old barracks, as in the case of old country or old town houses, they were never sure that they knew all about the drains, because, they would be occasionally finding disused cesspools in the most unlikely places. But, subject to that qualification, the War Office had no reason to believe that their knowledge of the drains of Wellington Barracks was not good for the purpose. There had been one case, and not two cases, of typhoid amongst officers; but they had to be guided to a certain extent by the medical report, which declared that the health of the men and officers had been excellent. The noble Lord was aware that if evil smells were discovered, or if drains were found to be faulty, the matter ought to be reported by the Commanding Officer to the General Officer commanding in the district. and if it were reported there was no question of insufficiency of funds, for the orders of the War Office were that sanitary matters should take precedence of all other matters.

Major RASCH said, he thought the right hon. Gentleman would find that the condition of Wellington Barracks was reported, and that no notice was taken of it.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, he was surprised to hear that, for it was not according to his idea of what should be done. However, he would look into the matter. As to the suggestions for the formation of a Central Board, the Army Sanitary Committee was, perhaps, sufficient for the purpose. He could assure the noble Lord that for his part no pedantic question would be allowed to stand in the way of anything of the sort that might be found possible. He had listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Lichfield with very much pleasure, for his hon. Friend had actually spoken in defence of the War Office. And why? Because his hon. Friend knew something about the War Office, having been himself in the War Office, not as a member of the Executive Staff, but as an officer of the Intelligence Department; and he, therefore, took a more favourable view of that department than was sometimes taken of it in the House. He should be glad to consider many points that had been suggested by the hon. and gallant Gentleman. As to his ideas about double companies, it was a question about which there was strong opinions on both sides; and if the War Department had not adopted an organisation of that kind it was not for want of full consideration. He had now answered all the points that had been raised, and he ventured to hope the House might be allowed to go into Committee.

THE TERRITORIAL SYSTEM.

*Colonel HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) who had on the Paper the following notice:—

> "To call attention to the incompleteness of the Territorial system between Regulars, Militia and Volunteers, and to move a Resolution,"

said he wanted to call attention to the operation of the territorial system in the Home District, although he could not move a Resolution. Every one had been pleased to read in the Memorandum the paragraph as to the numerical strength and efficiency of the Volunteers; and both sides of the House would congratulate the Secretary for War on his having authorised experimental mobilisation in the Home District. The scheme had been on paper many years; but it had never been tried in any thorough form in this country. It was proposed to invite the Reserve men to come out for a week. If that meant that they were to be invited to do so voluntarily, he feared that only inferior men would come out. If the thing was done at all, it ought to be done properly, and it was highly desirable that the Reserve men, under arrangements that they should not lose their situations, should come out with the battalions to which they are attached, He was a strong believer in the territorial system; it had done a great deal to popularise the Army by connecting particular regiments with particular districts. In illustration, he might point to the experiment of last year, the march through Wales of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, which was attended with great success. In the Army List the names of different Volunteer regiments were placed alongside those of territorial regiments to which they were supposed to be attached. But the 28 corps of Volunteers in the Home district did not appear to be affiliated to any territorial regiment, while the 3rd London, the 10th Middlesex, were affiliated to the King's Royal Rifles, and others were affiliated to the Rifle Brigade. It is hardly fair to give to the Rifle Brigade depôt at Winchester 19 adjutancies and over 60 sergeant instructorships. The Volunteers in the Home district are brigaded under colonels in in command of the Guards. The Volunteer forces of the Metropolis were greatly indebted for the interest taken in their instruction and welfare, by the officers of the Guards, and also by the non-commissioned staff. Therefore it seemed to be a pity, when appointments were to be made to permanent posts connected with the Volunteers of the Home District, such as adjutancies and sergeant instructorships, that they should be given to regiments other than the regiments with which they were, in a military sense, intimately connected. He believed the King's Royal Rifles and the Rifle Brigade were not, strictly speaking, territorial regiments, although the Volunteer forces in the Metropolis had been made over to them. If the Secretary for War would look into the matter, he would see that it was not quite fair that the different regiments of Guards should have no opportunity of obtaining posts in connection with the Volunteer forces of the Metropolis. Perhaps the officers had no desire to obtain them, but, however able might be the officers of the Rifle Brigade, it would still be an advantage to the Volunteers that they should be able, occasionally, to have Adjutants from the Brigade of Guards. And it was rather hard upon the non-commissioned officers of the Guards, who had a great deal to do with the organisation of Volunteers in the Metropolis, that when the time came for them to retire from active regimental life, they should not have the opportunity of obtaining sergeant-instructorships in the Volunteer Force, posts for which they were so admirably fitted. Another point was that the line regiments had three or four battalions of Militia affiliated to them. The Grenadier Guards, the Coldstream Guards, and the Scots Guards were the only Infantry regiments which had no Militia battalions and no Volunteer battalions affiliated to them. Both the Militia and the Volunteers would look upon it as a distinction to be affiliated to them in a territorial sense; and when one saw the Volunteer force serving, as it was in London, intimately connected with the different regiments in the Brigade of Guards, it was only fair his right hon. Friend should endeavour to give the Brigade of Guards, as of right, some of those permanent posts he had specified in connection with the Volunteer force of the Metropolis.

Sir HENRY FLETCHER (Sussex, Lewes) reminded the House that last year, on the Army Estimates, attention was called to the sanitary state of Wellington Barracks, and on that occasion the Secretary of State promised it should be immediately attended to. Now that they had the assurance of his right hon. Friend, he hoped the matter would be placed on a more satisfactory footing. He agreed that it was satisfactory to find that the country now had from 84,000 to 85,000 men in the Reserve; but he could not help saying, as one who had taken part in military Debates in the House during the last 15 years, that our Army had been, to a great extent, sacrificed for the sake of the Reserves. He recalled to the House that some 14 years ago there was a mobilisation of the Reserves on Portsdown Hill. On that occasion he accompanied the Duke of Cambridge and the Headquarters Staff when those Reserves were inspected, and at the time he could not congratulate the Military Authorities on the place to which they were invited to come forward. A more bare, bleak, uncomfortable spot was not to be found in the South of England than Portsdown Hill. The men, too, were not treated in a satisfactory way in respect of accommodation, and the Commissariat provided for them. He heard many civilians who took part in the mobilisation say that they would never do so again unless proper barrack accommodation was provided, and the commissariat was improved. Another matter to which he would call attention was the importance of providing suitable ranges for Militia regiments armed with the Lee-Metford rifle. It was highly desirable that such regiments should have facilities for firing their musketry course with the weapon with which they were armed. Last year many militia battalions armed with the Lee-Metford rifle were unable to go through their musketry course with that weapon. The Sussex Regiment, for example, found that their range accommodation was such as to make it unsafe to use the Lee-Metford rifle, and the old Martini-Henry had to be re-issued to them for their musketry practice. A state of things like that was eminently unsatisfactory. It was a curious fact that the first battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment, stationed in Ireland, was still armed with the Martini-Henry, although the Militia battalion of the regiment was armed with the Lee-Metford. The Militia recruits were drilled at Chichester with the Lee-Metford, but when they enlisted into the Regular battalion in Ireland they had to be sent back to drill for some weeks in order to learn the Martini-Henry drill. He hoped that Lee-Metford rifles would be served out to the battalion in Ireland without undue delay. The time, he thought, had now arrived when the House and the country should be informed whether in the opinion of the Military Authorities the territorial system was satisfactory or not. He had been studying the Report of the Inspector General of Recruiting, and he did not understand from that Report that the system had answered in all counties as well as was expected. In some counties scarcely any men enlisted in their territorial regiments. The system appeared to be most successful in respect of recruiting in Suffolk, in Sussex, and parts of Lancashire; but in the North of England generally men seemed to be disinclined to enlist in their territorial battalions. This disinclination was specially apparent in Cumberland and Yorkshire. If the territorial system was to be carried out successfully something must be done to weld together the different branches of the Service. Old soldiers like himself looked back to the days when regiments were numbered, and to the old associations connected with those regiments; but still, if the territorial system was proved to be a success—and they ought to be told if it was so or not—he, for one, would do all he could in his humble way to assist the arrangement. In conclusion, he desired to say a word with regard to rifle ranges. Last year he obtained a Return from the Secretary of State for War, in which it was stated that there were only 48 rifle ranges in the United Kingdom. He understood, however, that certain arrangements were now being made to add to that list, and he saw, from the right hon. Gentleman's memorandum, that there was a large tract of country in a certain part of England—he would not mention the name—which it was proposed to utilise; but he would like to ask whether it was that locality situated in the Midland counties to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded last year? No doubt a large sum had been spent upon ranges, and as the memorandum stated, £20,000 was asked for annually; but he hoped that if more money were wanted, the right hon. Gentleman would not scruple to ask for it.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) thought the time had probably come when the House would like to get into Committee with a view of hearing the right hon. Gentleman's statement the first thing to-morrow. He did not wish in any way to delay Mr. Speaker's leaving the Chair, and therefore he would only ask for information on one particular point, and that was as to the advantages offered to reserve soldiers in the way of employment in the Post Office. There was an impression that the facilities offered by the late Postmaster General had been modified. He did not know how that matter stood, and he would like some information upon it.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The evidence is being given to the Committee upstairs.

MR. BRODRICK would like to know the nature of it, but if the House now desired to get into Committee, he thought they might do so on the understanding that the right hon. Gentleman should make his statement to-morrow, when he would probably be able to give him the information he desired.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) pointed out that his right hon. Friend the Secretary for War had already stated that this matter was before a Committee. He could give an assurance that the present advantages offered to reserve soldiers were as great as they had ever been in the past. Evidence had been taken by the Committee from the Post Office, and that evidence would be presented to the House.

The House then went into Committee, and Progress was immediately reported.

The House having resumed,

SHOP HOURS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On the Motion for the Second Reading of this Bill,

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. H. H. ASQUITH, Flfe, E.) explained that the Bill made no addition whatever to the law, but was introduced merely to supplement the Act of last Session, which omitted to provide any penalty for the failure in the past of owners or occupiers of shops to advertise or cause to be posted in a conspicuous position on their premises an abstract of the Act. The result of the omission was that several cases had occurred in which there had been a failure to observe the provisions of the law in this respect. This was not a matter of contention at all, but the Bill was absolutely necessary to give effect to the spirit of the Legislation passed last Session.

Motion deferred till 1st April.

MORTGAGEES' COSTS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause I.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

BURIALS BILL.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [11th March] "That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House."

*MR. SPEAKER thereupon reminded the House that on the 11th of March the Order for resuning the Adjourned Debate on the Question that the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Law had been read and discharged, and that consequently the Bill was now in the position of a Bill which had been read a second time, without any Motion being made to refer it to a Standing or Select Committee. He had, therefore, to call upon the hon. Member in charge of the Bill to fix a day for Committee.

Order for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [11th March] "That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House," discharged.

Bill committed for Wednesday, 19th June.

PUBLIC HEALTH BILL.

On Motion of Lord Stanley, "Bill to confer Additional Powers upon County Councils for securing uniformity in the administration of the Public Health Acts within their districts."

Bill presented accordingly, and read a first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday next, and to be printed. [Bill 169.]

House adjourned at Five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 15th March 1895.

THE REVENUES OF CYPRUS.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY moved for a Return—

> "(1) Of all sums paid in each year since the year 1879-80, by direction of Her Majesty's Government, out of moneys arising from the Revenues of Cyprus, in discharge of the interest upon the Turkish Loan guaranteed by this country under the statute 18th and 19th Victoria, chapter 99; (2) of all sums voted by Parliament during the same period in aid of the administration of Cyprus."

In making the Motion, Lord Salisbury said: My Lords, I hope the noble Lord opposite (the Marquess of Ripon) will have no objection to my moving for this Return. I move for it in consequence of some observations made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons, and which surprised me a good deal. As I read those observations, he represented that the British taxpayer had suffered by the connection of this country with Cyprus. That is not my recollection as I knew the facts when in Office. Of course, that was some time ago. I am anxious to get the facts precisely as they are, and I do not think the noble Lord will see any objection to my doing so.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (THE MARQUESS OF RIPON): I have no objection whatever to the Return being made. But I do not think my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer quite said that the British taxpayer had suffered. I think he said he was paying £30,000 a year for the deficit in Cyprus, but I do not think, on the whole balance of account, he said he suffered.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: When he said the British taxpayer was paying, and did not hint that he was getting more, I think he may be said to have given a false impression.

Motion agreed to.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL.

Resolved—

> "That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament."—*(Lord Chancellor.)*

EVENING SITTINGS ON TUESDAYS.

Resolved—

> "That the Evening Sitting of the House on Tuesday next, and on all subsequent Tuesdays during the present Session, do commence at half-past Five o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order."—*(Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.)*

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

Read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday next.—(*Marquess of Ripon.*)—(No. 35.)

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND) (No. 2) BILL.

Read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday next.—(*Lord Morris.*)—(No. 36.)

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 15th March 1895.

The House met at Ten minutes past Two of the clock.

MOTION.

ENCLOSURE OR REGULATION OF COMMONS.

MR. THOMAS ELLIS (Merioneth) moved, that a Select Committee be appointed to consider every Report made by the Board of Agriculture, certifying the expediency of any Provisional Order for the enclosure or regulation of a Common, and presented to the House during the last or present Sessions, before a Bill be brought in for the confirmation of the Order. That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power in respect of each such Provisional Order, to inquire and report to the House whether the same should be confirmed by Parliament; and, if so, whether, with or without modification, and, in the event of their being of opinion that the same should not be confirmed, except subject to modifications, to report such modifications accordingly with a view of such Provisional Order being remitted to the Board of Agriculture. That the Committee do consist of 12 Members, seven to be nominated by the House, and five by the Committee of Selection. That Dr. Ambrose, Viscount Curzon, Sir Arthur Hayter, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Jeffreys, Sir Thomas Robinson and Mr. Taylor be Members of the Committee. That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records. That five be the quorum.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS.

POSTAL RATES.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the rates of postage on newspapers, book post matter, and parcels sent to Australia and the Colonies generally are very much higher than the charges made by carrying companies for the conveyance and delivery of an equal weight of parcels; and whether the Post Office has any monopoly of the right to transport newspapers, bookpost matter, and parcels within the United Kingdom or to convey them to the Colonies; and, if not, whether, in view of the disparity between postage and freightage, he will allow private carrying companies to despatch newspapers, bookpost matter, and parcels, at ordinary freightage rates, by the mail trains and mail steamships employed for the conveyance of the mails to the Colonies?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): For newspapers, books, and other articles sent in sufficient bulk, the freight charges are doubtless lower than postage rates, but the service rendered is not the same. Freight charges are for mere sea carriage from port to port. Postage covers not only sea carriage but also collection, land carriage by railway and otherwise both here and in the Colonies, and delivery. Moreover, for light packets of newspapers and books the mere freight charges are incomparably higher than the postage of ½d. the two ounces. The Post Office has no monoply in the carriage of newspapers, books, and parcels, either inland or to places abroad, and the public have already the right to choose between the Post Office and the carrying agencies, according as they want a complete or an incomplete service.

BRITISH TRADE.

MR. C. HOBHOUSE (Wilts, Devizes): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the Consular Report, 1,495, Argentine Republic, in which is stated the deplorable reduction in British import trade into that country and the acquisition by foreign nations of an undue proportion of what was once British trade, and in which it is further stated that this reduction is largely due to the lack of commercial travellers in British interests, and to the fact of the catalogues of manufacturers being printed in English instead of Spanish; and whether he will endeavour to draw the attention of all Chambers of Commerce in the United Kingdom to these facts?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): The Board of Trade have referred to the passages in the Consular Report from Buenos Ayres containing the statements in question, and they have also looked into the statistical trade volumes of the Argentine Republic and the other countries concerned. There appears to be some misapprehension in the Report as to the amount of the falling off in the imports from the United Kingdom into the Argentine Republic, and the increase of the imports from Belgium and other countries, the figures in the Report not being borne out by the statistics of some of the countries from which the imports come, including the United Kingdom. In any case, it is not safe to found sweeping inferences as to great changes in trade on the figures of two years only, and it already appears from the Import Returns of the Argentine Republic for 1894 that the imports from the United Kingdom in that year increased compared with 1893, while those from Belgium, Germany, France, and Italy diminished, the only one of the countries named which showed an increase in 1894 as well as the United Kingdom being the United States. I think it probable that there is such a lack of commercial travellers acting in British interests as my hon. Friend refers to. I believe that the matter is already engaging the attention of the Associated Chambers of Commerce.

TRADE MARKS IN ARGENTINA.

MR. C. HOBHOUSE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been drawn to the state of the law as to trade marks in the Argentine Republic, whereby well-known European marks may be registered by applicants in so short a time that no counter application can be made by the European owner, and consequently foreign goods registered under trade marks here are liable to embargo on arrival in that country; and whether, if the facts are as stated, he will cause representation to be made with regard to this law?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Her Majesty's Minister at Buenos Ayres will be instructed to report whether any action can be taken to place this matter on a fairer footing.

THE LOSS OF THE "WALDRIDGE."

MR. G. WYNDHAM (Dover): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the loss of life in connection with the wreck of the steamship *Waldridge,* which went ashore at Port Mulgrave, near Hinderwell, on the Yorkshire coast, on 31st January; whether he is aware that the men lost might have been saved if the distress signals had been rightly understood; and whether the signals prescribed in the schedule have in the past been found satisfactory and suitable for the purpose; if not, whether the Board of Trade propose to take steps with a view of improving the system of distress signalling?

MR. BRYCE: My attention has been called to the case referred by the hon. Member, which has formed the subject of a recent Board of Trade Inquiry. The answer given by the Court to the question put to them regarding the signals shown is as follows: 11. Was the vessel provided with distress signals, and were proper distress signals exhibited? Answer: The vessel was provided with the proper number of rockets and blue lights, but it was stated that the rockets had been in the ship above two years, and it may be that they had deteriorated. The signals exhibited, namely blue lights, were not proper distress signals. As a matter of fact, they were signals for a pilot, and were so understood from the shore. I am advised that the existing regulations, which have been in force for a long time, have been found satisfactory and suitable for their purpose, and that if they are complied with and the prescribed signals used, no confusion ought to arise.

FARMERS AND DOG LICENCES.

MR. J. H. ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the recent refusal of the Inland Revenue Inspector stationed at Denbigh to grant the tenant farmers exemptions from dog licences is causing great dissatisfaction in the neighbourhood; whether it is a fact that an exemption was refused to Maurice Roberts, of Tanygraig, Nantglyn, and that the dog had to be killed, also in the case of Evan Edwards, Llidiart-y-Green; if so, upon what grounds; and whether, in view of the extreme value of sheep dogs upon such farms, he will order an inquiry into the cases referred to?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The law only grants exemption from dog licences to persons who are farmers or shepherds, and who use the dogs "solely in tending sheep or cattle on a farm, or in the calling or occupation of a shepherd." Of the two persons mentioned in the question the former had only two cows and two sheep, and the latter had two cows. In the opinion of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, it would be doing violence to the Act to grant certificates of exemption in such cases. I understand that the number of dogs kept by persons who are not *bona fide* farmers has given rise to much complaint on the part of farmers and others. For instance, the Standing Committee of the Justices and County Council of Carnarvon addressed a strong remonstrance to the Inland Revenue not very long ago on this subject of exemptions. Moreover, I need not remind my hon. Friend that these exemptions represent a corresponding loss to the ratepayer, as the yield of the dog licences is appropriated, not to the Exchequer, but in relief of rates. The matter does not seem to me to call for an inquiry, but if my hon. Friend has any material evidence to adduce in support of his plea for exemption, I shall be happy to consider it.

TELEGRAPHIC CODE WORDS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is proposed that the recently-published official vocabulary of telegraphic code words, prepared by the International Telegraph Office at Berne, shall be made obligatory for all code messages in Europe, and ultimately for extra European messages; and if so, at what date; whether he has received complaints from mercantile men respecting the limited extent and incorrectness of this vocabulary; whether it has hitherto been permissible to make up a code message of words from eight selected languages; whether he is aware that many firms, relying on this permission, have spent large sums in preparing private codes extending to nearly 400,000 words, whereas the official vocabulary only contains 256,740 words; and whether, in consideration of the immense preponderance of British trade, he will secure for British merchants a continuance of the privilege hitherto enjoyed of using their own vocabularies, provided that these contain only words taken from the eight authorised languages, and provided that such vocabularies be first submitted to and approved by the Department, such privilege to apply to all messages transmitted between the various portions of the British Empire.

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: It was decided at the last International Telegraph Conference, held in Paris in 1890, that an official vocabulary should be compiled, and that the use of words taken from that vocabulary should be made obligatory for code telegrams in the European system, at the expiration of three years from the date of issue of the book; but the employment of the vocabulary outside this system was left optional. The three years will expire on the 31st December 1897. This country and its Colonies being parties to the International Telegraph Convention, and the adoption of an official vocabulary having been decided upon by the union, it would not, I fear, be possible for me to accede to the hon. Member's suggestion that British merchants should be secured a continuance of the privileges hitherto enjoyed, of using their own vocabularies, provided that these contain only words taken from the eight authorised languages.

THE POSTAL UNION CONGRESS.

MR. G. LODER (Brighton): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the date of the next Postal Union Congress has yet been fixed; and, whether the Government have taken any steps to obtain the assent of Colonial Governments for establishing penny postage between this country and other parts of the Empire?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: No, Sir; Her Majesty's Government have taken no steps to obtain the assent of the Colonial Governments to the establishment of penny postage between this country and other parts of the Empire, being well aware that many important Colonies are strongly opposed to such a measure. As I stated in reply to a question asked in this House on the 19th of last month, the next Postal Union Congress is to be held at Washington in 1897.

THE INNISKILLING DRAGOONS.

MR. G. LODER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that, by the promotion of Captain O'Connor to a majority in the Inniskilling Dragoons, four officers senior to him, who have seen service in South Africa, have been superseded; whether he can state what special reasons existed for his promotion; and, whether the Inspector General of Cavalry was consulted on the question?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): The vacancy arose from voluntary retirement, a condition of which is that it shall be filled by an officer of at least 18 years' service. The senior captain in the regiment had barely 14 years' service; but Captain O'Connor, who was brought in for the majority though junior as a captain, had had 12 years in the ranks, which enabled his service to be reckoned over 18 years The Inspector General of Cavalry was not consulted.

THE "PORTUGUESE PRINCE."

SIR EDWARD HILL (Bristol, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received the information from the shipowners as regards the condition of the *Portuguese Prince*, to which he referred on Tuesday; and whether he can state to the House the nature of the information?

MR. J. BRYCE: I have received through the Shipping Federation a statement from the manager of the line to which the *Portuguese Prince* belongs. He states that a very considerable amount was expended upon the ship and engines in 1893, that it was then thoroughly overhauled by the Board of Trade Surveyor, and passed No. 3 Survey by Lloyds, and further, that the machinery was carefully overhauled and inspected, and passed by Lloyd's surveyors at Antwerp in October last. I shall be glad to show the hon. Member a copy of the statement referred to if he desires it.

SIR EDWARD HILL: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly say whether he has seen a copy of the rules issued by the "Prince Company" for the guidance of their officers—with respect to water in the River Plate; whether they meet with his approval, and whether he could suggest any improvement in the interests of the crews of their vessels?

MR. BRYCE: Yes, Sir; I have seen a copy of the rules referred to by the hon. and gallant Member. They seem to be drawn with proper care for the health of the crew. I am hardly prepared to say whether they are susceptible of improvement, but they certainly evince a desire to take proper precautions for the health of the crews.

MONEY ORDER POSTCARDS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has seen the Bill of the French Government for introducing throughout France and Algeria the system of transmitting money by *mandat-carte*, or money order postcard, under which the amount sent is brought by the postman to the residence of the payee; and, in particular, whether he has observed the Ministerial statements in the preface of the Bill, that the system does away with the delays, inconvenience, and danger of fraud incident to the old system, and that it is certain to result in a large increase of postal revenue; whether he is aware that the *mandat-carte* system has led to a great and profitable development of money order business in Germany, Switzerland, and other countries; and whether he will consider the question of introducing it in the United Kingdom, and for the exchange of remittances with other countries?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: The subject is one to which I have given considerable attention, and I have caused careful investigation to be made of the system in force on the Continent, and of the various conditions peculiar to the postal services of those countries in which the system prevails. On consideration of the information thus obtained, I am not prepared to introduce the system at the present time; but I shall, of course, watch with interest the experiments which are being made in France and other countries.

OCEAN DERELICTS.

*MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is a fact that the Board of Trade has issued instructions that derelicts reported by captains of vessels to the Customs at home are invited to telegraph to Lloyd's as an experimental measure; and that consular officers at maritime ports abroad have been instructed to furnish the same information to Lloyd's agents, who have instructions to immediately telegraph the substance of the information to Lloyd's in London, at Lloyds' expense?

MR. J. BRYCE: Any instructions on the subject would not be issued by the Board of Trade, but by the Foreign

Office and the Customs respectively. The Board of Trade have, however, been in communication with those Departments on the subject, with the result that they are informed that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on the 11th instant, instructed consular officers to communicate to Lloyds' agents at their respective ports any information on the subject of derelicts received from the masters of British vessels. With regard to Customs Officers, the Commissioners of Customs intimated to the Board of Trade on the 8th ultimo, that they had informed Lloyds' that they were prepared to furnish the intelligence required to the resident correspondents or agents of Lloyds' upon application, and to authorise their collectors to transmit the information to the Committee in London from ports at which Lloyds' have no resident agents. Similar facilities will be accorded by both the Foreign Office and the Customs to any other bodies or persons who apply for them.

*MR. MACDONA thanked the Government for this most important concession, although it did not go as far as he desired it should.

SCREENING SHIPS' SIDE-LIGHTS.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the petition to this House of the Liverpool Mercantile Marine Association, representing 9,000 commanders and officers of the mercantile marine, praying that the Order in Council of 30th January 1893, relative to the screening of ships' side-lights, shall be inquired into by this House; whether that petition has induced him to reconsider the decision to refer this matter to a Departmental Committee instead of to a Committee of this House; whether he can state the names of the gentlemen whom it is proposed to appoint on such a Departmental Committee, and how many of them have had actual experience at sea in the handling of ships: and, whether it is proposed that any of the representative bodies of seamen or shipowners shall be consulted with reference to the composition of such a Committee?

MR. BRYCE: I have seen a copy of a petition presented to Parliament by the Mercantile Marine Service Association, which is stated in the petition to comprise over 3,000—not 9,000—members and which is to the effect stated. I see no reason for altering the intention which I expressed on 5th February last to a deputation headed by the hon. Member for West Perthshire, that I should refer this matter, which is one of a highly technical nature, needing to be investigated by the aid of experiments, to a Departmental Committee consisting of experts. The names of the persons whom I have decided to appoint, and who have agreed to serve, are as follows: The hon. Baronet the Member for Belfast; the hon. Member for Southampton; Rear-Admiral H. G. Andoe, C.B.; Captain H. F. Hughes-Hallett, R.N.; Mr. T. H. Ismay; Mr. T. Scrutton; Captain Wilson Barker; Mr. James Bolam, Secretary of the Scottish Shipmasters' Association; Captain J. S. Castle; and Captain Anthony S. Thomson. It will probably be necessary to appoint an Admiralty lawyer. Six of these gentlemen have had actual experience at sea in the handling of ships. I have taken the best means in my power to secure a Committee which shall be both competent and impartial; and so far as I know, none of these I have selected are committed to an opinion on the subject. It would be impossible to consult all the bodies who might consider themselves entitled to express an opinion, and very difficult to make a selection from them.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: How many Departmental Committees on the rule of the road at sea have there been since 1888 or 1889?

MR. BRYCE: There have been none confined to the rule of the road at sea, so far as I remember.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: Have there not been five Committees on the subject in and since 1888?

MR. BRYCE: I had better not say how many without notice.

SWAZILAND.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give the House any information as to the action of the Boer commando on the border of Swaziland; and whether there has been any military invasion of Swazi territory by the Boers?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I fear I cannot at present add to the statement I made yesterday, namely, that Sir H. Loch hopes that the new Convention will be carried into effect within the next few weeks without disturbance. There has been no military invasion of Swazi territory by the South African Republic.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Can the hon. Gentleman say where Colonel Martin is at present; and whether any communications have been received from him, and through what channel?

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Mr. Stewart is now acting for him, and communications come to us through Sir Henry Loch.

CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS.

MR. C. F. E. ALLEN: On behalf of the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. C. Shaw), I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the examination fee charged to candidates for the Civil Service is regulated according to the probable or the possible maximum salary attainable in the customary course of promotion; if neither be the case, upon what basis is the fee regulated?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: As a general rule the fee is fixed according to the maximum amount of salary attainable in customary course of promotion without further examination or certificate, but power is reserved, in the case of open competitions, to fix a lower fee in special cases where it is thought equitable or expedient to do so.

THE BUSINESS OF THE EVENING SITTING.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury if, having regard to the fact that the Select Committee on the Unemployed has no power to inquire into the effect shrinkage of the markets has had in causing the evil, the Government will make a House at the Evening Sitting this day so as to enable the matter to be considered?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The Patronage Secretary is not subject to cross-examination. The Government are responsible in these matters, and all I have to say is that it is quite impossible to distinguish one Motion from another, or to give assurances, with regard to a particular Motion, as to a special course involved.

MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston): Has it not been considered to be the duty of the Government to make a House on Friday nights?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think the Leader of the Opposition made a remark which struck me very much. He said that of all the valued privileges of the House there was none greater than that of choosing whether it would make itself. Unless the Government interfere with the rights of the House in that matter, they cannot undertake to make a House on Friday evenings. Of course the Government are always willing to leave these matters to the discretion of the House.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK DEPOSITS.

SIR H. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if his attention has been called to the recent great increase in the deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank, making at the present rate an increase of twenty millions a year; whether, inasmuch as this money is lent at call, and is virtually invested in and secured by an investment in Consols, he proposes to take any steps to prevent a sudden call upon these deposits, and to provide a suitable remedy in case there should be one, by giving the Government special powers to deal with it or otherwise; whether, inasmuch as the Government competition as a buyer of Consols is increasing so largely, with the result of inflating the price of Government securities in a corresponding manner, he can see his way to enlarge the area of investment in respect of these deposits, so as to include the stocks of different municipalities secured by rates as well as Consols; and, whether the Post Office authorities could give greater facilities and encouragement to the actual purchase of Consols by the present investors in the Post Office Savings Bank rather than their present mode of investment, and thus increase the class corresponding to the French peasant investors?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have observed with great satisfaction the enormous increase that has taken place recently in the Post Office Savings Bank deposits. It shows the power and the will of the humbler classes to save money. As regards the other questions, I shall generally answer them in the negative; but, as I have already stated with regard to the high price of Consols, a Departmental Committee has been appointed to consider this question with respect to the deposits in the Savings Bank.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I desire to ask whether the Leader of the House can afford us any indication of the course of Public Business next week?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The progress made has been unexpectedly slow, but I should hope we may get the Report of Supply on Tuesday, 19th instant. If so, we could then get the First Reading of the Appropriation Bill on that night. I hope we shall get the Army Vote to-night for the men, and then, as I was given to understand that the further Debate on the Navy is not expected to be very prolonged, if, as I hope, we get the Navy and Supplemental Estimates passed on Monday night—["Oh!"]—I may propose, and the hon. Member for Preston may dispose; but that is the expectation of the Government—there would then be Tuesday for the Report of Supply. Otherwise I do not see how we are to get through.

THE DEATH OF SIR ROBERT DUFF.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): Can the Government give us any information with regard to the very alarming telegrams from New South Wales?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I deeply regret to say that Sir Robert Duff died yesterday from the effects of an operation rendered necessary by the state of his health. His lamented death is a very great loss to the public service; and, to everyone who knew him in this House and outside, his loss will be the subject of very great regret indeed.

RELIEF WORKS IN IRELAND.

MR. J. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board propose to take any steps to provide relief works in Boyle Union in answer to the memorial received by the Guardians at their last meeting, from the priests and people in the districts of Cloonticarn East, Crosses, and Derinoheran; and whether, as the temporary Inspectors appointed by the Local Government Board have been persistently hostile to applications for relief works from Boyle, Carrick, and Mohill Unions, he can state definitely if any relief works will be started in the distressed areas in these large districts in the West of Ireland?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Local Government Board inform me that the Unions referred to in the question are well circumstanced, with low rates, and that no destitution prevails in them of such a character as would render necessary the opening of relief works, or which cannot be met from the resources of the Unions concerned.

TUBBERCURRY UNION.

MR. THOMAS CURRAN (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board for Ireland have had their attention called to the fact that the chaplain to the Tubbercurry Workhouse is actively interfering, publicly and privately, in the Poor Law Elections now proceeding in Tubbercurry Union; and are union officials permitted by the rules of the Local Government Board to interfere in elections of Guardians constituting the Board under which they serve; and, if not, what steps will be taken to prevent this gentleman from infringing the Board's regulations?

MR. J. MORLEY: A complaint has been made to the Local Government Board of certain proceedings on the part of the Chaplain of this workhouse in connection with the election of Guardians, and the Board have apprised the rev. gentleman that a person in receipt of a salary from the rates ought not to interfere in such elections beyond the exercise of his ordinary right of voting and his privilege of nominating candidates. There is nothing in the Board's regulations bearing on this subject.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

THE ARMY ESTIMATES.

The House then went into Committee of Supply.

Mr. J. W. MELLOR in the Chair.

(In the Committee.)

On Vote A for 155,403 men on the Home and Colonial Establishments of the Army, exclusive of those serving in India,

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs), who was received with cheers, said: Mr. Mellor, I remember that last year, in the course of the Debate which preceded the corresponding Motion to that which I am about to make, there was applied to me what, I suppose, is regarded as a somewhat damaging epithet. I was told that I was an optimist Minister—[Mr. HANBURY: "Hear, hear."]—and my hon. Friend who cheers accepts the responsibility. Well, Mr. Mellor, if an optimist, whether a Minister or not, means a man whose natural disposition would lead him to shut his eyes wantonly to deficiencies, to hide away failures, and to shrink from remedying evils, I hope that I need not repudiate any such imputation, and I hope that neither I nor anyone who may follow me in my present Office will ever be justly open to it. But, after all, I am not sure whether there is not something worse than an optimist even in this extreme sense of the term, and that worse thing is a pessimist. There are plenty of pessimists about, croakers and detractors, who are always ready, either from sheer love of the art of denigration, in the interest and with a view to the adoption of some untried theory, to denounce existing arrangements, and who generally do so with that airy and summary judgment which we never find except in company with imperfect information and a total lack of responsibility. If these Estimates, which I now submit to the Committee are optimistic Estimates, as I admit they are, it is only in this reasonable sense, that they recognise the good points of our present Army and do not seek to disturb the main principles of its system and organisation. It is quite consistent with the character and *rôle* of a reformer to wait until our reforms have borne their fruit and not to go on reforming the same field again and again. It is right that we should press the soil around our plant and trim and prune the plant itself; but it is hardly wise to take it up and plant it afresh every year, or even every half-dozen years. I have more than once stated in Committee of Supply on the Army Estimates my views of the purposes for which the British Army is maintained. I have said that in my opinion at the present time, as to the main fabric of our Army system, the truest courage and the best reforming wisdom lies in leaving well alone. But, as I shall prove, I hope, in explaining the Estimates, it does not follow that there are not minor and important improvements to be made. Above all, let it not be understood that the Army is at a standstill. On the contrary, it is steadily advancing in efficiency. The Regular Army, and its auxiliaries also, are advancing, and this is due, I would have the Committee believe, not to anything that has been done or anything that has to be done, by those who control its administration. It is due to the leaven working in the Army itself—to the great zeal, to the higher professional attainments, to the increased devotion of the officers and the men in its ranks. I should be culpable indeed, and so would those who work with me, if these Estimates showed any neglect of the real interests of the Army or failed to give evidence that we are doing all in our power to assist those who are so strenuously upholding, maintaining and advancing the standard of its efficiency. Now, Mr. Mellor, I wish to refer, in the first place, to a subject which takes precedence of all others. The question may be asked—it was asked on Monday night—are your preparations made in anticipation of the actual outbreak and circumstances of war? And again, another question may be asked—Is there between the two fighting services such a good understanding and such a common intelligence as would enable them to co-operate with effect on the outbreak of hostilities? These are genuine and vital questions, and I am able confidently to state to this Committee that within the last five or six years great strides have been made in this matter, and that now there is a perfect accord between the two services. I believe that every contingency which is reasonably probable has been foreseen, and I can assure the Committee of the satisfactory working of the administrative machinery by which questions of defence are jointly considered and worked out by representatives of the Army and Navy. By means of the Joint Naval and Military Committee the principles of Imperial Defence as regards the protection of our coasts and coaling stations have been formulated. The War Office has promulgated them to the officers commanding districts at home and abroad, and all local schemes of Defence have been corrected, where necessary, so as to harmonise with these principles. The Colonial Defence Committee has provided a means of discussing these matters, as they affect both Crown and self-governing colonies, and especially of communicating the approved principles to the latter. I may add that the experience of the war between China and Japan has shown us that the conclusions deduced from history, and especially from the history of our own country, have been correct—that the principles of war do not change, and that in the designing of defences against both attacks in force and raiding attacks, and in the modification of details rendered necessary by the improvements in ships, armaments and warlike appliances we have been working in the right direction. These Estimates show practically the same burden to be imposed on the taxes as those of last year. There is, indeed, a difference on the right side, from the point of view of economy, of £22,100, but this is, as I must admit to the Committee, a small and accidental difference on so large a transaction. Nay, I must in candour admit that the figure before them really means an increase of available money by at least £150,000, because prices of forage and provisions, which ruled high last year, are now low. But new demands and necessities are constantly pressing upon us, and, as I have before now explained, our requirements are now so rigid and stereotyped that there is very little room for that pleasant process which, were I introducing the Navy, and not the Army, Estimates, I should call "veering and hauling." In particular, the task of bringing old barracks up to modern sanitary requirements is a duty which public feeling will not allow us to ignore and postpone, and which constitute a large annual drain on our available funds. If hon. Members will turn to the memorandum which I have issued in explanation of the main features of the Estimates, they will see that the first subject with which I deal is that of establishments. And here crops up the perennial question of the excess in the number of battalions abroad. I assure the Committee that so long as I am at the War Office I will miss no chance of getting that inequality abolished or mitigated. We hope to be enabled to bring away a battalion from Egypt. The men saved by the decreased strength of the battalion and by the reduction of its depôt I propose to add to the battalions at Mauritius and the Cape. We should thus do two good things—we should add somewhat to the garrisons of those coaling stations, and we should (and this I consider much the most important matter) bring those battalions up to the standard foreign strength of 920 rank and file. It is now fully acknowledged that the most important point in working the short-service system is uniformity in the units—uniformity of recruits, of drafts, of discharges; uniformity, in fact, of drain, and uniformity of replenishment. The hon. and gallant Member for Oxford, indeed, derided even the slight degree of prominence given to so trivial a matter as the moving of a single battalion. He asked whether in the German Army any notice would be taken of so trumpery a matter. No, Sir, it would not. And the reason is that the German Army, though greatly exceeding ours in strength and numbers, is immeasurably more easy to maintain. Not only is it a conscript Army, but it is entirely a home Army; it has no foreign garrisons to supply, no foreign duties to perform. Our greatest difficulties—nay, all our difficulties—arise from the necessity of supplying drafts and reliefs for India and the colonial stations, and from these difficulties the German Army is exempt. With an equal number of battalions at home and abroad everything works smoothly; with a preponderance, however slight, abroad friction and disturbance arise. Therefore it is that we speak of the importance of even one battalion coming home. And I mean no disrespect to the hon. and gallant General when I say that his disparagement of this small circumstance does not indicate that he has brought his acknowledged acuteness of mind to bear effectively upon the problem he is so ready to solve. I pass over the additions which are made to the fortress engineers, and to the technical branches of that service, and I come to the artillery. Certain important changes are being introduced, as indicated in my memorandum, in the organisation of that arm, and these I must explain to the Committee more precisely. In the British service the relative proportion of artillery to infantry in the field army has for many years been dropping further and further behind the Continental standards. In order to bring the number of our guns into closer approximation with Continental standards, and with our own requirements, we propose an increase of one battery Royal Horse Artillery and seven batteries of field artillery—*i.e.*, a total of 48 guns on mobilisation. The result will be that on the mobilised or war establishments our proportion of guns will be 4·6 guns per 1,000 infantry, or, in other words, 102 guns per army corps, as opposed to the former proportion of 3·8 guns per 1,000 infantry, or 84 guns per army corps. This increase has been effected at a very small cost, so far as the peace establishments are concerned, being met to a large extent by administrative changes. These changes are, broadly speaking—(1) a reduction in the number of the horse and field depot batteries, and a curtailment of the duties hitherto assigned to them, a large proportion of the training hitherto carried out at the depots, together with the preparation of drafts for abroad, being, under the new arrangements, divided between the service batteries other than those of the 1st Army Corps; (2) a reduction of the batteries of medium strength to the four-gun establishment. The net result of these modifications and readjustments will involve no appreciable alteration in the total establishments of officers, non-commissioned officers and men, and horses, while, at the same time, giving us a total increase of eight batteries. It was asked, "What is the continental proportion of guns per army corps?" I think in Germany there are 5·7 guns per 1,000 infantry, and in France 5 guns; the average in the army corps of France and Germany is 120. As to the garrison artillery, I have to say that the number of service companies has been increased by six, three at home and three abroad. The increase of three companies at home is due to the increased duties in connection with the armament of Scotland—the southern and western districts—practically the defence of the mercantile ports. Abroad the double companies at Ceylon, Singapore, and the Cape of Good Hope have been converted into two single companies at each of these stations, with a small addition to the number of men in each case, it being found that the new arrangement is more suitable both from a tactical and an administrative point of view. These changes have been met, as in the case of the Horse and Field Artillery, by a reduction of the Garrison Artillery depots from nine to six, and a readjustment of the duties between the depots and the service companies, by which the former will be charged with the reception, clothing, kitting, and elementary instruction of the recruit, while the further training and the preparation of drafts for service abroad is to be handed over to the service companies. The Committee will see, apart from the question of the redistribution of force and the practical increase of the mobilised forces which we thus obtain, those changes will effect what I believe to be a very great improvement, that is to say, they will to a large extent assimilate the practice in the Royal Artillery as regards the training of recruits and preparing of drafts to that which prevails and is found to be efficient in the battalions of the line. I ought not, I think, to pass from this subject without saying that this is the result of the very closest attention not only of Sir Redvers Buller, but of General Lloyd, the Deputy Adjutant-General of the Royal Artillery, one of the most competent officers in his arm of the service. I must interpose a word here before I quit this subject. I wish to say a word of sincere and well-earned praise to a particular corps. The West India Regiment cannot be said, among all the units which make up her Majesty's military service, to be a favourite of fortune. It serves exclusively in trying climates; its duties are mostly monotonous; its officers' service is a prolonged exile; its men are of a different race from ourselves; and therefore it is the more necessary to make ample acknowledgment of the excellent service which it has done within the last two years on the West Coast of Africa. It has never failed in its duty, and its gallantry and endurance have stood every test. We have, however, to deplore the loss of several officers and men, and above all I would mention Colonel Ellis, not only a first-rate soldier, but when in charge of a force a worthy representative in all respects of the British power. The whole Army in my opinion may well be proud of their comrades in the West India Regiment. The state of recruiting for the Army is fully explained in the report of the Inspector-General. During last summer we lost from the War Office the services of General William Feilding, who had been at the head of the recruiting branch, and who had brought into it a great wealth of energy and fertility of resource from which we shall long benefit. The fated hour, however, had arrived for General Feilding—what answers to the "crack o' doom" under present conditions of compulsory retirement, and he had, to the great regret of all friends of the Army, to relinquish his post. The vacancy having occurred, I took the opportunity to unite this office with the Deputy Adjutant General for the Auxiliary Forces. The truth is that the business of recruiting is intimately wrought into the questions affecting the Militia and the Reserve, and that much advantage is gained by the same officer who controls the one being responsible for the other. Accordingly, Sir Francis Grenfell, with an officer to assist him, is placed over the whole of these duties, and they could not be in more capable hands. During the year 1894 the number of recruits who joined the Regular Army was 33,698. How has that filled our wants? Sir Francis Grenfell, in paragraphs 3 and 4 of his report, very clearly explains what is required:

> "(3) In recruiting for the British Army, more than half of which is stationed abroad, and whih is raised by voluntary enlistment, the following difficulties have to be contended with: (a) We have to obtain a sufficient number of recruits to meet the annual waste. (b) We have to find men of the proper age, height, physique, and trade, to meet the requirements of the various arms of the service. (c) We have to distribute them as they are obtained, amongst the several regiments and corps, to meet not only present, but future requirements, and this is no small difficulty, bearing in mind that the establishment of battalions varies with their location at home and abroad, and that recruits before enlistment almost invariably select the corps they wish to join. (d) We have to keep our Army in India up to full strength with trained soldiers of not less than 20 years of age. (4) The British establisment of the Army at home and in the Colonies, as voted by Parliament, can never at any time of the year be exceeded, and this requires careful watching, particularly between the months of April and September, since during that period there is no drain upon it for Indian drafts. The first troopship leaves England with drafts for India early in September, and the men embarking are, on the day the ship leaves, struck off the British establishment. We endeavour, therefore, to recruit up to full numbers by September 1st. If the British establishment were complete two or three months before this date, restrictions would have to be placed on recruiting to prevent the number enlisted exceeding the ordinary monthly waste. Restrictions are very detrimental to recruiting, as it is found by experience that it is sometimes months before the usual flow of recruits comes in after the restrictions are taken off. From this it will be seen that the state of the Army on September 1st is the best test of the effect of recruiting for the year."

Now, on September 1st, the total establishment, British and Indian, which had been deficient on that date in 1890 by 5,913 men, in 1891 by 6,651, in 1892 by 1,398, in 1893 by eight, had, in 1894, a surplus of 1,230, being, on the Indian establishment 1,025, and on the British, 205. These figures show a steady and satisfactory trend towards a healthy completeness, and are a proof, not only of so much more briskness of recruiting, but of a more careful and scientific administration. May I quote two paragraphs from my own memorandum which exactly exhibit the results of this careful administration, which is one of the fruits of the investigation this subject received at the hands of the Wantage Committee? I say;

> "The report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting will be found to be satisfactory, though the age at which young men join the service seems to be much the same as in past years. By careful administration, however, many of the evils formerly noticeable have been cured. It is found that by closely watching the constitution of the regiments, by the strict regulation of recruiting, so as to avoid abnormally large numbers of men being posted to regiments in the same year, and by the extension of the service of men in the few battalions suffering from exceptional circumstances, excessive drafts from regiments at home have been almost completely avoided. The general result is that, after supplying nearly all the drafts, there are only five battalions now at home that have not in their ranks between 300 and 400 rank and file of over 20 years of age. The general average number of such men in all the home battalions falls little short of 400. This is a more satisfactory condition than was at one time thought possible under the present organisation of the service, and when it is borne in mind that for every home battalion there are 700 to 800 men in the Reserve (excluding the Militia Reserve), it may be claimed that the short-service system has at length been brought to as good a state as was anticipated when it was instituted by Lord Cardwell."

It being found impossible to obtain this full number of recruits in all respects up to the standard, Sir F. Grenfell explains in Paragraph 9, which I will not read to the Committee, how we fill up our numbers with growing lads, and the measure we take to regulate by higher authority these special cases. The percentage of these for the last five years has been 25·8, 32·9, 30·6, 22·3 and 25·4; and it is found that a large proportion of these recruits—about two-thirds—had in a few months of steady life, drill, and feeding, reached the full standard. A fair test of the quality and stamina of recruits is also afforded by the number invalided per 1,000 effectives under two years service: and these were for the last five years successively, 14, 14, 14, 15, 12 per thousand. That is a fair and satisfactory result. Only 12 per 1,000 of these "weedy recruits," as they are sometimes called, were invalided during the first two years of their service. The net waste from desertion has fallen from 2,726 last year to 2,125 this year; and I hope I am not unduly optimistic when I say that these figures and facts show a most satisfactory progress in this vital matter of recruiting. The record of the Army, as regards both health and discipline, in 1894 is good. The admissions to hospital among the home troops were considerably below those of the previous year; and the death-rate was only 3·59 per thousand. Let the House compared that with the death-rate among the civil population. The percentage tried by court martial for all offences, serious and otherwise, has fallen from 6·85 to 5·96. Now, as to the organisation of the Army for actual work: a steady advance has been made in the arrangements for the mobilisation and concentration of our Forces for home defence, tending to greater simplicity and consequent efficiency. I hope I am not wearying the House with this statement, but the facts are important, and one cannot be oratorical over them. "For greater accuracy," as the phrase goes, I have committed them to paper. The mobilisation regulations have been revised and several changes have been introduced. Instead of keeping two sets of regimental equipment in different places, as was the former plan, we now, in nearly every case, keep the whole of the equipment stored at the mobilisation station of the unit—that is, at its peace station. This will save both time and expense, as several civilian caretakers are dispensed with. On mobilisation being ordered, the registered horses will be sent to the peace station of the unit, instead of to the remount centre; thus it will be seen that the units will receive all their home-defence equipment and horses at one station. The few additional articles required by units for service abroad are held at the port of embarkation. Five bearer companies and five field hospitals were mobilized at Aldershot and the Curragh, associated with the other arms of the Service in the important duties which would devolve upon them in war. These manœuvres were most instructive to the staff and the other officers as well as to the Department, for which they were primarily undertaken. We hope to repeat these exercises, perhaps on a smaller scale, yearly, in order that the bulk of the Medical Staff Corps now serving may be trained in the work. Partial mobilisation was carried out at most of the important coast commands at home and abroad. The Army Reserve on February 1st this year reached the total of 84,372 men. This is an abnormal strength, owing to the very circumstances to which I was referring—too large a drain on some occasions, filled up by too many recruits, and too many men going out into the Reserve. I hope we shall have more regularity in future. The strength will now probably somewhat diminish; but there will be no difficulty in keeping it up to 80,000 by reviving Class D, consisting of men ready to extend their service beyond 12 years. The men are there on paper, we used to be told; but shall we find them when we want them? That is a question which may reasonably be asked. Yes, these men are on paper, and they are in the flesh also, there being only 1,014 absentees out of 80,349 men. And the proportion of absentees to effective strength, which was 23 per thousand in 1890, has fallen steadily in subsequent years to 21, 19, 17, and 13.

Mr. HANBURY: What are these absentees—men who have not drawn their pay?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes, and the fact that they have not drawn their pay is a very good test of the non-existence of the men. It is proposed that some Reservists should be asked to come out in connection with a contemplated mobilisation of Guards this year. I am asked: "Why not call them out, and why not alter the law to enable you to do so?" This is a matter requiring great deliberation. Our Reserve men may have difficulty in finding employment. A Committee of the House is now investigating that question. But I am satisfied that that difficulty might be increased in a manifold degree were we to make them liable to be called away from their vocations at the sweet will of the Secretary of State, and in obedience to some possibly trivial military necessity. With regard to the Militia, those members of the Committee who listened to me last year will remember that I said that restrictions had been placed on Militia recruiting at the end of 1893. These restrictions were continued for more than two months in 1894, and they necessarily had an unfavourable effect upon the numbers enlisted, there being a falling off of over 12,000 recruits, as compared with the previous year. The restrictions, I may say, were the suspension of the enlistment of growing lads between 17 and 18 years of age, and the raising of the standard of height in most regiments. No doubt the number of recruits enlisted was also affected in a way which the Committee will not regret, by the stricter inquiries that were ordered to be made as to their antecedents. But although 12,566 fewer recruits were enlisted than in 1893, the enrolled strength of the Militia, on January 1, 1895, was only 4,936 less than it was on January 1, 1894, and the numbers present at the training of last year (including those excused from attendance) were actually 83 more than were present at the training of 1893. This satisfactory result is owing principally to the number of absentees without leave being 3,027 less than in the previous year, which is due, almost entirely, to the stricter inquiries made into the recruits' antecedents, and the more stringent measures taken for the punishment of absentees by bringing them to trial by Courts-martial instead of before the Civil Courts. On May 1, 1884, an alteration was made in the payment of bounties both to re-engaged militiamen and recruits. Formerly, the re-engagement bounty of 30s. was paid to the men at any time of the year when their re-engagement or re-enlistment took place. But it was found that a number of men received the bounty and did not come up at the subsequent training. From our knowledge of human nature, that is what we might have expected. Now, however, unless a man re-engages at the training, he cannot receive his re-engagement bounty until the subsequent assembly of his regiment. As regards recruits, they formerly received £1 of their £2 bounty on the termination of their drill on enlistment, or on joining the Regular Army; whereas now they only receive 10s. This had a very little appreciable effect in deterring Militia recruits from joining the Army, but it has had a considerable effect in bringing more men up to the training. Both of these alterations in the payment of the bounty will effect a considerable saving to the public; and will, no doubt, tend to lessen the number of absentees from training. It will thus increase the genuineness and the real efficiency of the Militia force as shown in the numbers enrolled. The percentage of these absentees fell last year for Militiamen generally from 10·9 to 8·7, and for recruits from 23·1 to

18·9; and I hope it will continue to diminish. I am sorry to say that there is a growing deficiency of officers, especially in the Artillery Militia. This may be in some measure due to the reduced number of artillery commissions now allotted to Militia subalterns; but—speaking for myself, with the strong prejudices which I have—I can hold out no hope of any change in this respect. The Royal Military Academy, in fact, supplies as many young officers as we require; and I must frankly disclaim any personal favour for the Militia entrance to the Army. I am not sure that the couple of years that these young men go through a few weeks' training with Militia regiments, in which they can take only a passing interest, are always well-spent years. And when I think of the labour required, for preparation on the part of candidates at the open competitive examination, and the expense which that preparation imposes on parents, I am not at all disposed, in justice to them, to extend the easier and cheaper modes of access to the commissioned ranks. During 1893, 13 Militia battalions were trained in brigade at Aldershot and five at Strensall. Now, I do not know whether many hon. Members have been present on an occasion when Line and Militia battalions—as often happens, now that under the territorial system they are so closely connected—act in co-operation. If they have, they must have been struck with the incongruity when a fine Militia regiment, excellent in discipline and in physique, and with every reason to be proud of itself, goes past with no better head-dress than the Glengarry or the forage cap, while the line battalions have the full dress helmet. I have said that this is incongruous; but it is worse, for it is felt to mark some degree of inferiority, and on active service the effect might go beyond mere sentiment. I am not one who would care much about a difference in a strap or a button, or in the colour of a trimming; but so glaring a difference in head-gear, conspicuous at a distance, ought surely to be avoided. I am therefore happy to say that I hope in the coming year to make a beginning with the issue of helmets to the Militia, and the clothing vote will enable us to make the issue to about 25,000 men. Of the Yeomanry we continue to receive satisfactory reports; the smaller corps are disappearing and larger and more efficient corps are improving in drill and discipline. There is especially an improvement in musketry, and my friends who serve in the force will be pleased, and perhaps relieved, to know that the contingent allowance is now settled for three years and will be £3 to those who pass out of the third class in musketry and 30s. for those who do not. Turning to the Volunteers, this popular, and I would say characteristic, element in our defensive force is stronger than it has ever been. The numbers enrolled were 227,741 in 1893, 231,368 in 1894. The higher-grant efficients rose from 217,900 to 223,972, the lower-grant efficients fell from 1,211 to 871, while the numbers at inspection were in 1894 200,693; in fact, to use a slang phrase, it was "a record year." During 1894 62,218 Volunteers attended brigade camps. Now I have no doubt they derived great benefit; I have no doubt that others who formed a regimental camp derived benefit from doing so; but, on the other hand, it has been represented to me, on the part of a considerable body of opinion among Scottish Volunteers—and the Committee will forgive me if I deem them among the best—that they hold brigade camps, and still more regimental camps, to be little better than a picnic ["Oh!"]—well, that is their strong opinion—and that they derive more good from visits, even at wide intervals, to a camp of instruction, such as Aldershot or Strensall, where they can work with, and learn from, regular troops, than from any series, however continuous, of local and partial exercises. That is what is pointed out to me on behalf of a considerable body of men. They therefore wish that the money which would be spent upon allowances for local camps should be concentrated on the rarer and more costly expense of a visit to a camp of instruction. Now I will tell the Committee my idea on this subject. It is that with the most voluntary of all voluntary forces we must suit all tastes, all tempers, and all circumstances. I therefore would try, while leaving facilities for local camps to those whom they best suit, to gratify the more aspiring ambition of those who wish to travel, even from Land's End or John o' Groat's, in order to enjoy what they consider a higher training; and I hope some steps towards this may be possible. I do not wish to impose any sort of uniformity or to put any impediments in the way of forming regimental camps, but if a regiment find it more beneficial to themselves, owing to their merits or their faults, to proceed more rarely to a training centre and get the benefit of being under Line officers and trained by brigadiers of the Line, seeing and copying the work of the Regular forces, then I think, by the help of the railway companies, we may be able to indulge that wish. The long-service medal has been now issued, and I rejoice that this recognition has been given, though somewhat tardily, to men who have served their country well. I hope that the conditions are now acceptable, and I think I deserve the congratulations of the Committee on having yielded one concession after another until, to the best of my knowledge, there is nothing left to yield. On the subject of the Volunteers I wish to add that I have considered with all care and respect the recommendations of the Select Committee which sat last year under the able presidency of my hon. Friend near me (Mr. Woodall). After weighing their report and the evidence received by the Committee, I have come to the conclusion, with the complete concurrence of my military advisers, which I will now state. I shrink from any alteration of the conditions under which Volunteers can be called out; I shrink from substituting "National danger and emergency" for "Actual or apprehended invasion" as the occasion on which this can be done. This may not please some of the most forward spirits of the Volunteers, among whom I recognise my hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Howard Vincent); but I am more cautious. I am much mistaken if such an alteration would not give rise to uneasiness among many Volunteers who have business engagements which would be suspended by invasion, but might not be affected by circumstances included in the vaguer phrase of "National danger or emergency." I am, however, willing to consider whether fuller powers should not be taken to accept the voluntary offer of service as a way of meeting the difficulty. At present, although we are able to accept the offer of a Volunteer, the Secretary of State cannot accept their service as a body. I hope that some further step in this direction may be taken. The Committee recommend that Volunteers when under arms and in uniform should be subject to military law. Again I would say that, however reasonable this provision may seem to some ardent gentlemen, I doubt its being palatable to some even of the ablest and hardest-working members of the force; and I observe that the Committee themselves say that the commanding officer already possesses ample powers to deal with offenders, and this is surely the better solution. With regard to general meetings, I hope that the difficulty pointed out will be got over by an amendment of the Volunteer Regulations. We propose to adopt an important recommendation of the Committee and amend the Military Lands Act so as to permit a Volunteer Corps or Local Authority to borrow from the Public Works Commissioners on the security of their buildings as they have been constructed. This will prove a considerable boon, I think. Now I come to the transport vote, and the question of transport naturally suggests ships. Are there any hon. Members present who will join me in dropping a tear over the official grave of that venerable vessel the *Assistance*? In the vote for provisions the Estimates are framed upon the low market prices which have ruled for a number of years, which show no immediate sign of any considerable move. In forage particularly, for which as an exception the drought of 1893 caused high prices in 1893–4, the large crop of 1894, with the open winter of that year, has provided abundant stocks for 1895, and the sum required has greatly fallen—it is reduced by about 25 per cent., contributing, as I have said, a considerable sum of money which we can spend on other purposes. Coming to the Clothing Vote, let me say at once that I underestimated the amount required last year, and I have now to increase the Vote by £52,000. I assume fully the blame, not for the amount required this year so much as for the insufficient sum taken last year, and my excuse, such as it is, is twofold. In the first place, we had a large stock in hand at the beginning of the year; and, in the second place, we had a very energetic and ambitious Director of Clothing, and I counted too much even upon his well-known powers. After all you cannot make bricks without straw, and the best of all possible directors cannot furnish clothing without money. The new system of issue of clothing to troops is in full operation and is working quite successfully. Under it, as hon. Members will recollect, the soldier retains his old clothing (except his greatcoat and helmet), and a cash allowance is made for clothing when the soldier makes it last beyond the prescribed time. The annual April issue has been abolished, and issues are now made on the anniversary of enlistment. A new system of account also is in operation, and is working well. Perhaps it is hardly necessary for me now to go into details. A system of inspection of regimental clothing stocks is now fully developed. A trained staff for inspection has been provided, units in the United Kingdom have been mapped out for periodical inspection, surprise visits are made, and units leaving for or arriving from abroad are inspected on departure or arrival. This, it is to be observed, has been cordially welcomed by commanding officers. Shorter and simpler clothing regulations have been published. The new regulations are about a quarter of the size of the old book, and greater freedom of action is allowed to commanding officers in the matter of clothing. War reserves have at last been put on a sound footing. A definite standard has been authorised which includes clothing for the whole of the Army Reserve, besides sufficient clothing to put the Militia into the field. Complete supplies of clothing and necessaries for an expeditionary force will shortly be in store. Money is now provided to fully complete all deficiencies, and a staff has been created for specially matching the reserve stock, which will be ear-marked so as to avoid depletion and deterioration, and storage accommodation has been improved and increased with a view to ensuring rapidity of despatch. I think that this will give much satisfaction to the Committee. Further, the transport arrangements have been improved and cheapened. Water carriage will in future be employed as much as possible in cases where time is not a first consideration. Arrangements are being made with the railway companies for rapid despatch of goods without the intervention of middlemen, and an expert with military training has been supplied by the Director of Clothing to supervise transport arrangements. The arrangements which have been made by the Director of Clothing, and which I have sanctioned, will result in placing for the first time the whole of the railway system of the country—that is, the finest railway organisation in the world—in direct and immediate touch with the Clothing Department, thus ensuring the immediate despatch and rapid delivery of clothing in case of mobilisation. There has also been a great improvement in the system of storing clothing, and simplifying matters in the event of mobilisation. Patterns are being overhauled with a view to improvement where necessary, and to greater uniformity. If the Committee do not think these details beneath notice I will mention a few instances. Cavalry pantaloons and boots have, at increased cost, been greatly improved; better serge and khaki drill for foreign clothing is being introduced; an improved infantry greatcoat has come into issue, and endeavours are being made to obtain a lighter and more flexible infantry boot; also to introduce a more useful and sightly helmet than the present one for the Field and Garrison Artillery. Provision has been made for the issue of khaki to the garrison at Malta at a cost of about £5,000, and the Malta Militia will be furnished with greatcoats. Valises of a new pattern will be supplied to the Field Artillery. A considerable sum has been allotted for the provision of improved cloth for the field-service cap, the present quality having been generally complained of. Experiments are being made in aluminium for mess tins and similiar articles. This will show that the Department has been active in the past year. After the conversation of last night, I am happy to be able to add that employment at Pimlico is found for Reservists to the very fullest possible extent. Except for technical posts, only men who have served in the Army or Navy are now taken on. Already about half of those employed are ex-soldiers, and the number increases yearly as vacancies occur. Another important fact is this—an Army Order has been issued this month authorising, within certain limits, the sale to soldiers of necessaries. Formerly, if a soldier required any small article, such as a toothbrush, it had to got through the ordinary forms, and be debited here and there, and there was a great deal of fuss about it. It is believed that the change, which has been well received, will prove a boon to the soldier and a relief to the accounting officer. It may seem a small matter, but, after all, these apparently trivial reforms do a great deal to increase the soldier's comfort and contentment. Turning now to material of war, properly so called, I believe that in the past year, and in our provision for the coming year, we are well keeping pace with the march of scientific improvement. The last year has been marked by a general advance in artillery material, of which I will give some of the most remarkable instances. The use of wire in the construction of guns has enabled us to make ordnance of exceptional power, with the result that, whereas a few years ago a muzzle velocity of 2,000 foot-seconds was accepted as being sufficient, we have now guns of 2,300, 2,500, and shall have some of 2,600 and 2,800 foot-seconds. The accuracy of guns has likewise increased. For example, the 12in. gun threw three rounds, at a range of 2,000 yards, through a hole a little larger than the shot, while at a range of over 10,000 yards the mean error in range of three rounds was only 15 yards. I think these are remarkable proofs of the extraordinary strides that have been made in scientific gunnery. Both of these results are, to a great extent, to be ascribed to cordite, the use of which has developed, with the result that we have last year fired charges as large as 167½lb. The bursting charges of our shells have been increased, owing to the additional capacity which can be obtained from shell of a given weight if made of cast steel when compared with cast iron, since the strength of the former allows the walls to be made thinner. Additional power in projectiles will shortly be given by the use of high explosives as bursting charges. The light gun of the horse artillery has shown itself on the practice ground equal to the former heavier gun, and the latter is about to be increased in value by the introduction of a 15lb. shell. This, again, is due to cordite, since, now that the charge of 4lb. of powder can be abandoned for one of less than a pound of cordite, the weight thus gained can be put into the shell, and thus a more powerful projectile can be given without adding to the weight of the gun behind the team. A slightly altered system of rifling has enabled us to make barrels for rifles and for Maxim guns which are serviceable after having fired many more rounds than formerly. Considerable progress is being made in the provision of armament, and an advance is to be noted in the power of both guns and projectiles and in the simplification of the mountings. A new time fuze adopted for field artillery is a great improvement upon any of its predecessors, and the difficulty which was at one time experienced in sealing the vent of guns fired with cordite, and thus preventing erosion, has been altogether overcome. In the coming year we shall make the first step towards a new siege train, by ordering two batteries of 6 inch B.L. howitzers, which are pieces of exceptional power, considering their small weight. In my memorandum I announce the intention to provide one additional battery to the new horse artillery gun, of which we have now only one battery. It is not often that a Minister has the pleasure of improving upon his own promise; but I am in that position. Instead of one, I propose to provide three additional batteries, and this, I am sure, the Committee will be pleased to learn. Another battery of field howitzers will also be provided, and the armaments of several important stations will be completed. The materials of the field artillery will be fitted with all the latest improvements, and a considerable number of batteries will be changed from shaft to pole draught. Arrangements will also be made to supply Artillery, Militia, and Volunteers with a certain number of depression range-finders, in order that they may receive instruction in their use. As regards the new rifle, I will explain to the Committee precisely how that matter now stands. The whole of the Infantry have been re-armed with the following exceptions:—the 2nd Battalion North Lancashire Reigment, the 1st Royal

Sussex Regiment, and the 2nd Lincoln. As regards the first two battalions, they are stationed in Ireland, and have not been re-armed up to the present on account of want of large accommodation, but that we hope will soon be provided, and the arms are ready for them. As regards the third battalion, it is now on its way home from Singapore, and orders have been given for it to be re-armed on its arrival in England. As to the Militia, orders have been given for all battalions in Great Britain to be re-armed with the new rifle. If range accommodation is not available, battalions are to carry out their musketry practice with Martini-Henry rifles. To enable them to do this, they are allowed to retain 100 or 200 of those rifles. As regards Ireland, orders have been issued for nine Militia battalions only to be re-armed, the Field Marshal Commanding the Forces saying that range accommodation cannot be provided for more during 1895. Speaking generally, the only obstacle in the way of the entire re-arming of Line and Militia battalions is lack of range accommodation, as to which I shall have something to say further on. As members will see, there is a large diminution in this Vote for warlike stores, due to our requirements being in great measure completed. On the Works Vote there is, on the contrary, a considerable increase. Of this £55,800 is the addition to the sinking fund for repayment of expenditure under the barracks loan. Then there is the constant demand for sanitary repairs and adaptations, which, with old buildings as their field, are pressing and growing, and with which it is difficult to cope. Let me give as instances—Aldershot, £3,000; Windsor, £3,500; Belfast, £2,000; Ashton, £2,800; Canterbury, £3,000; Woolwich, £5,000; Bermuda, £3,900; Netley, £6,500. And I would call attention to the large sums, no less than £357,700, for maintenance—a service which it would be the worst possible economy to stint. The chief new services are the increase in barrack accommodation in St. Lucia, and the commencement of a military hospital in Hong-kong, in place of the hospital ship *Meeanee*, which has been reported unfit for the purpose. Other services are the purchase of land for artillery and rifle ranges, notably at Kilbride in the Dublin district, and a contribution from the War Department towards the cost of drainage and water supply at Gibraltar. I have mentioned the barrack loan. The progress of works under it continues steady and satisfactory, the average annual expenditure being about £600,000. Up to the present time £3,000,000 have been authorized, and nearly £2,400,000 actually paid. The Corporation of Dublin have agreed, for the purpose of carrying out their sewage scheme, to purchase Pigeonhouse Fort, and the purchase-money will be employed in the provision of accommodation in or near Dublin, to take the place of the buildings surrendered, as a central store for Ireland. I am glad that this—I will not say quarrel, but difficulty, has been arranged in a manner satisfactory to the Dublin Corporation, as well as to us. We were anxious to assist them and further their drainage scheme; but it was impossible for us to surrender useful and necessary accommodation without some equivalent. I must say now a word or two on the subject of ranges. I have never disguised the serious effect of our deficiency in this respect, which is indeed palpable, for an improved rifle is of little advantage if the men who are to use it are not trained in it. The sum of £20,000 taken in previous years, and now repeated, enables us to make a gradual provision. But I should not have been contented with this, and would have proposed that it should be largely increased had I not had in view a project whereby a very material increase will, I hope, be made to our training facilities. I trust I shall be able to speak more explicitly when this Vote itself comes before the Committee. I am obliged to the Committee for listening so patiently to what I am afraid was a very dreary story. But in submitting these Estimates I have two final observations which I desire to offer to the Committee. The first I address to it in the capacity of the Secretary for War, as the representative in this House of that great Service with whose administration it is one of the greatest honours and pleasures of my life to have been so long connected. I see letters in the newspapers from persons who apparently think themselves very ingenious because they have made the discovery that this year the Navy Estimates actually exceed the Army Estimates in amount, and forthwith they wrote to *The Times* announcing their remarkable discovery. Well, Sir, I am certain of my ground when I say that the officers of the Army, high and low, from the Commander-in-Chief and the distinguished soldiers surrounding him, downwards to the lower ranks, have no fault to find with that fact. On the contrary, they approve of it; they rejoice in it. They recognise that the Navy fills the first place in our national defence, and they applaud the policy of maintaining it in full strength for its high duties. My second observation is made rather as a Cabinet Minister than as Minister for War. We are well aware of the great burden upon the people of this country which the sum demanded this year for the two Services involve. It is not with a light heart or without grave reason that we make our proposals. But we believe this large expenditure to be necessary in the interest of the security of the Empire. We are satisfied that, under the close and ever closer supervision which our financial business, as well as the professional duties of the Army and Navy, now undergo, an ever increasing value is obtained for the provision made, and we know that in making this provision we shall be supported by the general sense of the British people.

Mr. BRODRICK (Guildford) said, he was sure that every member of the Committee who had listened to the right hon. Gentleman would admit that a more practical, straightforward, and explicit statement in connection with the Army had never been placed before the House, and the right hon. Gentleman would especially have the sympathy of the Committee in the remarks with which he concluded his observations. It had been, no doubt, a relief and a satisfaction to the Committee to hear that though large additional sums had been demanded for the Navy this year, there was no reduction in the Estimates for the Army. That had not been the experience of previous years, and no more unfortunate doctrine could be maintained than that the Army should suffer because the necessities of the Navy became greater. He had no intention of following the right hon. Gentleman into the numerous points he had thought it necessary to raise, but, on the other hand, while expressing general concurrence with what had fallen from him, he desired to refer to one or two important matters to which the right hon. Gentleman had made no allusion in his statement. It would be in the recollection of the Committee that last year there was a most important discussion on the organisation of the naval and military services of the country, and that on that occasion a pledge was given by the right hon. Gentleman, after a speech from the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean, that he would take this subject under his special attention. They heard from the Civil Lord of the Admiralty on Monday that some progress had been made in the general survey which it was hoped the Committee of the Cabinet would take, but the hon. Gentleman told them that, not being a member of the Cabinet himself, he could not tell the Committee what had been the nature of that progress, and to what extent the pledge given had been carried out. Now, the right hon. Gentleman had just told them that this was a vital question. He had told them, in general terms, that great strides had been made in it during the last few years, and he assured them that a satisfactory working had been obtained of the Joint Naval and Military Committee. He was entitled to ask the right hon. Gentleman what he meant by it. He understood that the Joint Naval and Military Committee was a Committee composed of officers of both Services, who met to consider difficult questions referred to them by the Secretary of State. That was a most valuable Committee; its deliberations were most important, and were necessary to the proper handling of the two Services. But they had asked for something more than that. In the course of the Debate last year it was agreed that the system which had obtained up to that time, by which a Committee of the Cabinet occasionally met to discuss and decide disputed points between the Army and Navy, was not a sufficient interposition by the Cabinet in those affairs, and it was asked that this Committe of the Cabinet should have permanent records and confidential advisers. Then it might be assumed that the Cabinet would have the real points and difficulties properly put before them. The leader of the Opposition put this request in definite terms, and it was not too much to say that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War approved the view that was then taken. Well, what happened now? Had such a Committee of the Cabinet been permanently established? Did the Committee take a general survey of the whole question, or only sit to decide disputed points? Were any minutes of the meetings—any permanent records—now kept which might be passed on from one Cabinet to another, and which future Cabinets—having in view the same objects as the present Cabinet, and without political views—could consult? It would be reassuring if the right hon. Gentleman gave the Committee satisfactory assurances on those points. He had been much disappointed at the speech and memorandum of the right hon. Gentleman, and also at the Estimates themselves, in reference to the question of the provision of stores. The right hon. Gentleman had told the Committee the additions he proposed to make to the Horse Artillery, but he had not told them whether he had made a further provision for a reserve of guns for the new batteries which he proposed to establish. It could not be seen from the Estimates whether he was using the present reserve of guns to create the new batteries. If a reserve was not provided, then they would be making of the guns a sort of stage army. He saw that the total amount demanded for the equipment and reserve of the field artillery in the present year showed a decrease of £3,000 on the Estimates of last year, and that fact was not, in his opinion, at all satisfactory. But there was a more serious matter, and it was in regard to the small arm ammunition. He brought this question before the right hon. Gentleman last year, and pointed out then that an adequate reserve of ammunition ought to be made. He was appalled to find that this year no provision whatever had been made for such a reserve. This was a subject on which they had a right to press for information; for if hon. Members compared the numbers of troops which could be put in the field in case of invasion with the number of rounds of small arm ammunition available, he did not hesitate to say that the House of Commons would take more interest in this matter than it had hitherto done. There would, he thought, be a feeling of disappointment that the re-arming of the Militia with the magazine rifle had gone on so slowly. The original scheme certainly contemplated the re-arming of the whole of the Militia and the whole of the infantry Volunteers by this time, not necessarily with the magazine rifle, but with a rifle of the same calibre as the magazine rifle. He had hoped the right hon. Gentleman would say something on the question of the colonial contributions. A great deal of discussion had taken place in the Press, especially in the Colonial Press, on the subject during the last 12 months, and he should like to hear that the investigations which took place two or three years ago showed that the treatment of the Colonies was liberal, and not injurious to them. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on the decision he had taken to increase the Artillery. The reduction of the Horse Artillery seven or eight years ago had caused a great deal of feeling in the Army, and had been a subject of continuous criticism from that time. That reduction of the batteries of horse artillery was, on the whole, unfortunate. He could not go into the reasons for that reduction without giving pain to persons still living. No man was more unwilling to take the step than the late Mr. Stanhope, but it was forced upon him. It was represented to him as the most important reason for that step that the horse artillery was in excess of the proportion it should bear to the rest of the troops. That want of proportion no longer existed, and he was glad the right hon. Gentleman had realised that, and had gone back upon the previous decision. The Secretary of State and the Director of Clothing were to be congratulated on the improvement that had taken place with regard to the Army clothing. That improvement showed that they had taken to heart the fear expressed by the hon. Member for Preston that in the event of an outbreak of war the arrangements for the transport of clothing would break down. The right hon. Gentleman was also to be congratulated on his decision in regard to the calling out of the Volunteers not to change the words "threatened invasion" to the suggested words "national danger or emergency." It was his misfortune to endeavour to carry a measure destined to make that change; and the reception given to it, not only by Volunteer colonels, but by experienced Military officers like the late General Hamley, was such that the Government decided not to proceed with it. He hoped that, as the Estimates had been maintained very much in the position in which they were last year, the right hon. Gentleman would have every facility for carrying them within a reasonable time.

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said, he did not share the optimistic views of the Secretary of State or the hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman laughed at those who desired to make large reforms of system. But even in that part of the speech of the Secretary of State there was a large admission and concession to the reforming element. The right hon. Gentleman said that the want of plan, which had been alleged with more or less truth to exist a few years ago, had been remedied by the Joint Committee of the two Services and the Committee of the Cabinet. This was an admission that the institution of these two Committees had brought about a joint view of the question of national defence which the Hartington Commission had pointed out to be wanting.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: When I spoke of being reluctant to disturb the present system, I meant the existing system of the organisation of the Army. My right hon. Friend is speaking of the administration of the Army—the relation between the Army and the Navy, and so forth. On that ground I am a Reformer. I signed the Hartington Report. That reform has not yet been accomplished, but when it has been accomplished I should be quite in favour of waiting to see whether the reformed system would work or not.

*SIR C. DILKE said, he was very glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman's clear explanation. With regard to the Committee of the Cabinet, the Civil Lord of the Admiralty told them that since last year it had been in operation, and he claimed that it was an important new departure. Therefore it must be, at all events, an extension of the pre-existing system. There was a very wide difference of opinion in all parts of the country, and in the House itself, between what might be called the two schools on this question. There was a great deal to be said for the position which the Secretary of State had consistently taken up. Any Member of the House put at the head of the War Office would hesitate in disturbing the existing system because of the immense difficulty in replacing it by a completely successful new one. But there were others who felt that in Army matters, as in foreign and colonial matters, we were getting into the habit of treating all that existed as the best that was possible, and of not attempting to make changes which were really justified by the facts. The Secretary of State for War was undoubtedly very disinclined to move. He said that Mr. Knox, the Accountant-General of the Army, might be classed as an Army reformer. That threw a certain light on the opinions of the Secretary of State for War. The present Pope was, he believed, under the impression that he was an ecclesiastical reformer, but that opinion was not shared except by those in the immediate surroundings of his Holiness. The Secretary of State asked the Committee to sanction an increase in the number of guns. A few years ago the Committee was asked to sanction a decrease. On whose responsibility was that advice given? An hon. Member on the front Bench opposite told them he could not say, as, if he did, it might hurt the feelings of certain living persons. Surely this wobbling in a very few years on a question of very great importance illustrated the want of system and the necessity for some responsible advice in connection with the Army. In the event of war it had been contemplated by high authorities that two complete Army corps would have to be sent from this country to India. In the event of such a call upon our resources, our Army at home—if, indeed, we needed such an Army to guard against invasion and could not rely upon our sea forces—was very short of artillery for the support of our enormous body of half-trained infantry. We were very far short of what we ought to have in mobile field guns, and the more doubtful our force was for defence the more necessary was it for us to have a quantity of well-trained mobile artillery.

When the right hon. Gentleman said that he was going to get a portion of the increase from the depôts, he was counting in the increase a number of guns at Woolwich which had been always reckoned as a part of our national defence. It was satisfactory, however, to note that in the present instance the Secretary for War had informed the Committee of the authority upon which he proposed the increase—namely, Sir Redvers Buller and General Lloyd. The Committee might also congratulate themselves upon another matter mentioned in the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. He spoke of the probability of our being able shortly to use high—explosive shells. Reticence on such a matter could be well understood; at the same time, he did not much believe in it, because he had always found that foreign Governments knew about our experiments and failures in such matters. For example, the failures at Lydd had been published abroad. If our successes were not known abroad our failures, at any rate, were known there. It was, however, an interesting point that there was hope of our shortly coming into line with Germany and France on the question of high explosive shells. In view, however, of the fact that the French Minister of Marine had recently stated that it might shortly be possible to do away with very heavy guns at sea and to use high explosive shells in smaller guns, he thought this country was far behind its neighbours in regard to this matter. The Secretary for War, in the closing words of his speech, had alluded to the very large character of the demand made on the country in the present year. These were, in fact, the heaviest peace estimates ever laid before this country. Probably our expenditure on sea and land would be from £56,000,000 to £58,000,000, while next year it would reach the latter figure at the least. With the expenditure in the colonies, it would come to nearly £60,000,000, and after next year that figure would at least be reached. The country would vote the money willingly enough if it could be led to feel that it was getting value for its money. Generally speaking, he believed that the country did feel this in regard to the Navy, but as regards the Army that impression did not, in his belief, prevail. This country spent more upon its land forces than France, Germany, or Russia, although the last-named Power maintained more than 1,000,000 of men with the standards upon a peace footing. The reason which was always given for this was that we had no conscription, but he believed that, apart from the question of conscription, the expenditure upon our Army was at a vastly higher rate than that in other countries. He had formerly put forward suggestions for a certain arrangement between the Indian and Home Services. These had been criticised, and, he would admit, to a certain extent broken down. But Lord Roberts and other authorities far more competent than himself had made other suggestions, leaving the United Kingdom partially separate from the Indian system, and these if adopted would, he believed, prove cheaper for India and more effective for the United Kingdom than present arrangements, and were well worthy of consideration. It was an open secret that the most witty of the colleagues of the Secretary for War had described our system as resembling a man who keeps 20 horses in his stable, but who is hardly able to send a gig to meet a friend arriving at the station, and who, if a carriage and pair was required, was unable to turn it out and was compelled to hire. We had an immense nominal force, almost equal to that of one of the great Continental Powers, but we could only show for it an organised force of about two corps in India. All the rest was more or less chaos; and possibly, after six weeks or two months of preparation, we might organise another force of two corps at home. We differed from Continental countries in this—that we did not train our officers by giving them the opportunity of dealing with men in large bodies, and thus obtaining experience of some of the conditions of actual warfare. We had cavalry regiments of from 220 to 240 horses of military age stationed in the manufacturing towns of Lancashire. But single regiments of this description were hardly more than squadrons, and nothing but political reasons in the past had led to this dispersal of our cavalry force. We could not have cavalry in the Continental sense unless these regiments were trained together. He would not compare this country with the great Continental Powers, but he would take a small Power which, in a military sense, was as small and old-fashioned as ourselves—he meant Belgium. A few years ago Belgium had, in all, eight cavalry regiments dispersed in all parts of the country. Within the last few years these eight cavalry regiments had been brought to two stations, four to one and four to the other; and the strength had been brought up to 3,000 men and 3,000 horses of military age at each station. Under conditions of this sort you could do something with cavalry; but here we were still going on under the old wretched system, with the men scattered about in many places, which had the practical effect of throwing away the money we spent. Of course, in India cavalry occupied a more favourable position. Coming to another point, he would put a delicate question to hon. Members. If names were asked for, they could not be given in public; but he would ask those who knew anything about the present condition of the Army whether, in such a matter as selection for high command, there was at present in our system of military administration any security that those we put into positions of high command where they were able to get military experience, were only those men who were fitted for such posts, and who would hold command in time of war? It was within the knowledge of hon. Members that within the last year or two high divisional commands in India and at home had been given to those who might be very good fellows, but intellectually were not fitted for command in time of war. As long as this state of facts continued, there was not ground for the cheerful optimism which marked the present conduct of the War Office and the opinions of the Secretary for War and his immediate predecessors. On the general question, if we could adopt something like a half-separate system for India, which would consider Indian needs as far as a portion of our recruiting went, we should be able to adopt for home defence a system that would be vastly cheaper than the present. The large expenditure on our land forces provided something for India—some reserve for India, and very little else. If we had to consider only home defence, we should have a system something like that of Switzerland or of our colonies. The colonies had adopted a system intermediate between our system of Volunteering and the system of paid armies; they had Volunteers who were paid for the actual time they gave to drill, and who returned to their usual avocations. In Switzerland, for a sum which did not exceed two millions sterling a year, and which, leaving out arms and supplies, would not exceed a million a year, they were able to put into the field 408 field or mountain guns, and by universal admission the force was one of the most efficient artillery in the world. The Swiss had in the first line 130,000 men, in the second line 80,000 men, and in the Reserve, for which arms and clothes were provided, 270,000 men. For Home defensive purposes, if we were free from the Indian problem, we could obtain plenty of men to go through the necessary training for less than we were spending. The Secretary for War had said little about manœuvres, and the reference to them in the printed statement was neither long nor satisfactory. The cost of manœuvres on a large scale had been the reason given for not having them in the past, and last year it was the difficulty of obtaining the necessary ground in a densely-peopled country. Unless we had such manœuvres we could not train Generals. Even without a great extent of land, there was something to be done, as had been shown in Russia, Germany, and France, by merely moving about large bodies of men. If we merely brought the men together, and moved them from London to the coast, we should find ourselves face to face with problems which had tried the most eminent commanders of Russia, Germany, and France. This year the French would bring into their manœuvres forces numbering from 120,000 to 125,000 men; and they were going to be exercised almost entirely in simply marching from one point to another, which would involve the solution of many problems as to the writing of orders and as to supplies. Even such movements as were possible on our Downs would test the efficiency of our Generals and the marching powers of our men; and the great distances that were from year to year marched by the men of foreign armies showed their endurance and the completeness of their organisation—matters in which it was to be feared we were falling far behind them. With conscription and short service, the work was made harder on the continent than it could be in this country; but still our deficiencies were worthy of the attention of the Secretary for War.

*SIR F. FITZWYGRAM (Hants, Fareham) said, that he believed the cavalry required thorough reorganisation. The number of men and horses voted by the House was, in his belief, sufficient for all probable purposes, but the cavalry force was rendered inefficient by its organisation, which was radically bad. The remedy for this evil was plain and clear, though, perhaps, somewhat drastic; but he had no doubt that the reform, though long needed, would be opposed by the Commander-in-Chief. The number of the rank and file on the Estimates for the cavalry, excluding the three household regiments, was this year 10,500, divided into 19 regiments. Besides this, there were nine regiments in India having five squadrons apiece, but, as he heard that they were tolerably efficient, he should say no more about them. Of the first 19 regiments referred to only six could be called anything like efficient. They were nominally 600 strong, but that would not give more than 500 or 450 efficients. The remaining regiments were on lower standard, and every cavalry officer knew that for purposes of war they were absolutely useless. It was no doubt the policy years back to maintain weak regiments which could be augmented in the course of a war. Such a policy as that might have been proper in the days when wars lasted seven or perhaps fourteen years; but such a policy at the present day was absolutely rotten and out of date. What was the use of a regiment unless it was fit to join a campaign before it was over? The two great wars within the last 30 years were those between Prussia and Austria and France and Germany. In the first the Prussians were under the walls of Vienna in 49 days; and in the second the power of France was broken up in the first five months. In face of these modern facts, what was the use of our cavalry organisation? A system ought to be adopted under which every regiment maintained on the Estimates should be thoroughly fit to start on a campaign to-morrow. The plan he wished to put before the Committee was this—to take the 10,500 men and to divide them into 14 regiments of 750 strong, each with five squadrons of 150 men each. That would give four squadrons for the purposes of war, and a depôt squadron. In this way there would be 14 regiments 600 strong, perfectly trained and perfectly fit for war, and a fifth or reserve squadron of 150, and he for one, both as a cavalry officer and a man of common sense and observation, would much rather have 14 effective regiments than 19 regiments which everybody knew to be ineffective. Two great objections were made to this proposal. The first was a sentimental one—namely the breaking, up of regiments with old and valued traditions. No one felt that more than he did, but when it became a question of absolute necessity for the benefit of the cavalry, that ought not to prevail, and the change ought to be made at once. The other objection was the thorough distrust of the War Office which was felt by a great many old soldiers, the belief that the War Office would readily accept a reduction in the number of regiments, but in a few years, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer was hard up, would reduce the number of men, and the last state would be worse than the first. He did not attach any value to this view, for he did not believe that the House would ever be so wanting in its duty to the country as to allow that to be done. In view of the increased amount voted for the Navy when the necessity arose, he had no doubt that the House would always be willing to vote what was necessary for the Army. He believed the scheme he had proposed was a good one, and he hoped the Secretary for War, though he was an optimist and saw everything in a rosy light, would see that there was some force in what he had said—that without any increased cost to the nation and without any increase in numbers, there was no difficulty in rendering the cavalry force, which he believed to be composed of the best officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, equal to any body of cavalry that could be required in war. There was another point he wished to mention, and that was in regard to the reserve cavalry men. In the infantry he believed the reserve man was very useful, because in civil life he kept in work; in fact, he should think he did a great deal more work than the infantry soldier in barracks. But the case with the reserve cavalryman was quite different. He was employed about horses and stables, but they seldom or never mounted a horse, and the consequence was that after a year or two they became stiff in the muscles required for riding. He wished to suggest that after being two years in the cavalry reserve the cavalryman should be transferred to the infantry reserve. It would, no doubt, be objected to that that man who had been accustomed to the carbine would not take readily to the musket. He did not think there was anything in that. Though the man who had been using the musket found it very difficult to accustom himself to the carbine, the man who could shoot with a carbine would find no difficulty with the musket. But his point was, not to keep on paper men who could not be depended on for war. As to the mounted infantry, he had always been a strong advocate of that force, but they were not as well trained as they ought to be, and the expenditure upon them was greater than it need be. In the first place 300 or 400 cobs were bought, though he believed they turned out a pretty good speculation. Then his second objection was, that a large number of men were sent down to Aldershot to be trained by a staff which was much too small. His third objection was that the system was more expensive than was necessary. A better plan would be to send, say, 30 men from an infantry battalion to the nearest cavalry regiment for training. That should be done as soon as possible after the cavalry drill season was over, and the training should last from about October 8 until December 15. Another batch of 30 line men could join the cavalry regiment on January 1, and stay with it until March 15. This would give the men practice in the riding-school for two-and-a-half months. In London men could be sent in this way from the Foot Guards to the regiments of Household Cavalry, and no expense would be entailed. Similarly men could be trained with ease with the cavalry regiments at Aldershot, Shorncliffe, and York, and all other cavalry head-quarters. The plan could be carried out without expense. If it was thought that 30 men were too few to send from one regiment in a year to train with cavalry, let the number be increased to 60. He might be told that the cavalry regiments would object to the trouble, but he believed himself that no cavalry regiment would raise the slightest objection to this scheme. In fact, cavalry regiments would be glad to have these additional men, for in the furlough season they were always short of troopers.

*SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee) said, he wished to interpose a very few words with reference, not to anything contained in the admirable statement of the right hon. Gentleman, but with reference to an omission which he thought was made in it. In reply to a question recently in the House referring to the rapidly diminishing number of the old soldiers of the Crimea, the Financial Secretary indicated that the right hon. Gentleman would make some statement on the subject to-day. When the Party opposite were in power, a very considerable addition was made to the number of these pensioners, but he thought the time had now come when the right hon. Gentleman might fairly consider whether, having in view how rapidly these poor fellows were disappearing, he could not deal with them as a body, and once for all grant them those pensions which would be of so much advantage to them in their declining years. There was another point. Under the present conditions, these pensions were given practically only to poor fellows who, if not in the workhouse, were approaching it and in receipt of outdoor relief. The condition that they must be in absolutely destitute circumstances was really most discouraging to the best class of these poor men; men who had some slight assistance from their friends, or who were able to earn three or four shillings a week, could not receive a pension. It was quite needless to dwell on the desirableness of such pensions being given. He had received only yesterday a letter from a distinguished officer who served in the Crimea, in which he said:

> "More noble, devoted soldiers than my old comrades of the Crimea, especially those of the winter of 1854-5, never breathed the breath of life. Badly fed and overworked, exposed, ill clad, to all the rigour of a Russian winter, weak and ill in body, but undaunted in spirit, they nobly upheld the honour of the Empire against the far superior numbers of a brave enemy. Exposed in the open under most dangerous and

distressing circumstances, they held their ground at the point of the bayonet. Owing to the position I then held in my regiment, I knew the men well, how in the midst of their sufferings and when wounded, they cheered and blessed our good Queen for her sympathy with their sufferings. As it was with my regiment, so it was with the others. Devoted and loyal to Queen and country, they nobly performed their duty as British soldiers, and surely now in their old age, in their declining days, something better than the cold shelter of a workhouse should be provided for them."

That was the testimony of a distinguished officer who saw, from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month, in that extraordinary winter what these poor fellows endured and suffered. He could not make an appeal more cogently, but he trusted that before the vote was passed, they would hear from the Secretary of State an intimation that something more would be done.

Mr. W. H. MYERS (Winchester) called attention to the recent fire at Winchester Barracks, and asked whether the barracks would be re-built. He understood that the Military Authorities had recently been surveying the site. He believed that at the time of the fire the control of the water mains in the barracks was in the hands of the barrack authorities, and that it was the custom to turn off all the valves at four o'clock in the afternoon, thus shutting off any inflow of water from the mains. He wished to know whether this practice was still continued, and whether it prevailed in other barracks, at Portsmouth, for example, where there was a fire the other day. He understood that it was not the custom at the War Office to insure barracks. What, he would like to know, was the extent of loss sustained by the fire at Winchester, and how was it to be met? Was there any sinking or reserve fund available for the purpose?

*Sir E. S. HILL (Bristol, S.) drew attention to the difficulty of inducing officers of the Royal Artillery to serve as adjutants of volunteer artillery corps. Assuming volunteer artillery to be necessary, and considering the important positions allocated to it in the plan of national defence — this would appear to be the opinion of the Military Authorities — he held that there could not be a more important duty devolving upon officers of the Royal Artillery than the duty of assisting to instruct volunteer artillery corps. The truth was that this post of adjutant was not attractive, and there was extreme difficulty in inducing suitable officers to come forward. The term adjutant in the case of volunteers did not convey exactly the same meaning as it did in the case of the regular forces or Militia, because there were duties that fell upon adjutants of volunteers which did not appertain to the same position in the senior Services. Upon the manner in which an adjutant of volunteers imparted instruction depended to a very great extent the amount of attendance at drills, and so the efficiency of the regiment. The difficulty to which he referred was largely connected with the question of pounds, shillings, and pence. There was no doubt that it was a disadvantage to an officer in the Royal Artillery to accept the position of volunteer adjutant, for the allowances made to him did not cover the expenses which they were intended to meet. It was true that an extra allowance had been granted to these adjutants by the late Mr. Stanhope, but since then an increase of pay, called "armament pay," had been given to garrison officers in the Royal Artillery, so that the extra allowance had ceased to be an inducement to officers to serve as adjutants. The pecuniary position of adjutants ought to be improved. If the armament pay, 3s. a day, could be extended to them there would be competition for these posts instead of disinclination to accept them. It was undesirable that very young artillery officers should be posted to volunteer adjutancies. An adjutant of volunteers should have the experience of a captain, as is required of adjutants of militia. Another reason for the reluctance of artillery officers to become volunteer adjutants was their fear that when they rejoined their regiments they might be deemed ignorant of the latest scientific improvements in artillery. Such fear, however, would cease to exist if facilities were given to adjutants to attend classes at Shoeburyness or elsewhere. Allusion had been made to the scarcity of officers in the Volunteer force. They did not want pay, they did not wish to be covered with medals, and they did not wish Army commissions, has had been suggested, but they should be treated as integral portions of Her

Majesty's defensive forces, and relieved of heavy expenses for what really and truly appertained to their means of instruction. He was sorry the Secretary of State found himself obliged to say that captiation allowances was a payment in advance based upon last year's returns, so that in the event of a new volunteer regiment being raised, it would have no right to capitation grant in respect of its first year. That declaration would be heard by commanding officers with dismay, because it was well-known that, in many instances, they had pledged their personal credit for debts incurred, on the understanding that the grant was by way of payment for past services. He trusted this matter would receive the serious attention of the Government. Again, volunteer officers should have better facilities for attending schools of instruction. At the present moment they were at a great disadvantage as compared with their brethren in the Militia, in respect of allowances. It was discouraging to them to find that the commissions they held did not entitle them to the privileges which similar commissions signed by Her Majesty conferred on other officers. The only remedy he had to suggest for the scarcity of officers was that the force should be united, as far as possible, with the Army, and that it should be clearly understood the Volunteers formed an essential and necessary portion of Her Majesty's defensive forces.

Sir A. HAYTER (Walsall) congratulated his right hon. Friend upon the absolutely unique position which he occupied, not only in presenting Estimates showing an absolute diminution of £22,000 upon those of the preceding year, but also showing figures less by £717,000 than those presented by the Admiralty for the sister service. Nor did it appear that this result had been arrived at by any diminution of the number of men, which displayed an actual increase, while the Inspector General of Recruiting bore witness that never at any time were his operations conducted under more favourable circumstances, nor the ranks better filled with recruits of good stamp, than during the past year. He knew that this was not altogether a circumstance bearing testimony to the prosperity of the country in other walks of life. On the contrary, it was probably true that industrial difficulty was military opportunity; but so far as this service was concerned, they must rejoice that this prosperous state of affairs had been brought about, not by any lowering of the standard of height, or accepting men of a less satisfactory physique, but by the actual offering of men of adequate stature, and improving physical conditions. Another most satisfactory feature was the diminution of the number of men who quit the Army by purchase, showing that those who were discontented with the conditions of service were a number yearly decreasing in strength. In 1892, 3133 purchased their discharge; in 1893, 2617; in 1894, 2454, bearing emphatic testimony to the increased comforts and attractions of the Service. He regretted extremely that the right hon. Gentleman had thought fit to limit the manœuvres to a short distance from Aldershot, thereby depriving the troops of the experience to be gained by more extensive operations. Whatever zeal the Duke of Connaught and his Staff might display, it was hardly possible, when moving so short a distance from their base, that the two important Departments of the Commissariat and Transport should have adequate practice in their most essential duties. In any event, he trusted that the modest sum of £6,000, spent last year with such good effect in the Cavalry Manœuvres at Churn, would not be spared this year. It was hardly possible for any Cavalry officer or sergeant to have in any other way adequate instruction in brigade and division: our troops were so scattered or in detachments, especially in Ireland, that no commanding officer had a chance of bringing his regiment together and in contact with other troops, except in the large camps; and anyone reading the Memorandum of the Inspector-General of Cavalry upon the late manœuvres could not fail to discern the supreme importance which that general officer attached to the annual drill of Cavalry in large masses. Last year the Secretary of State said—

> "There is a sum of £2,400 taken for drilling and training Army Reserves, which, although a modest sum, is a step in the right direction. It was for three days' training, or 12 drills to be done by men of 10 years' service."

He should like to know the result of this experiment, and also whether this invitation to the men of the Reserve to come out this year was in any way connected with the same object? As he had been, since his connection with the War Office, advocating this step, he might be allowed to express his satisfaction that the Military Authorities appeared at last to share his views. To leave 84,000 men of the best and most seasoned material to take their chance of being able either to shoot or to drill, until the very outbreak of hostilities, appeared to him to be the most dangerous and foolhardy proceeding. The Secretary of State for War mentioned that some 800 of these men were due to each battalion of Infantry at home, and they could easily see that with proper care they would form the backbone of our Infantry force. How far they would respond to an invitation to come out this year was very doubtful, but he only ventured to advocate that they should do a certain number of drills and shooting with their local rifle corps, and not leave their occupations at all. He had only one other point to mention. Last year the Secretary of State promised that he would look into the question of the teaching of modern languages at Sandhurst. No provision was, he observed, made for either French or German teaching this year by the appointment of professors at Sandhurst, and we were in this anomalous condition that we gave 1,000 marks at the entrance examination for a knowledge of French and German, and we took every opportunity of discouraging the study of those languages amongst the students afterwards. Now there was a professor of German and a professor of French at the Staff College within the same grounds as Sandhurst itself. Might not those students, who desired it, attend lectures at the staff and continue their study of French and German, and be encouraged to keep up their knowledge of these languages by some recognition in the final examination by additional marks when competing for commissions?

*The FINANCIAL SECRETARY of the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Woodall, Hanley), replying to the points which had been raised by the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean, said that arrangements for charging shells with high explosive acids were so far advanced that special buildings were being erected at Woolwich in which that work and the fitting of the shells with safe and efficient detonators could be carried on with the maximum of safety to the people employed in a comparatively dangerous occupation. In regard to the points raised by the hon. Member for Guildford, he could assure the hon. Gentleman that the store of small arm ammunition was so ample that it was not necessary to take a larger sum for the coming year than was provided in the Estimates. The fact was that, although the manufacture of cordite was seriously interrupted by the regrettable explosion at Waltham, they had been able to profit by the supply of nitro-glycerine with which their own gun-cotton was saturated by private manufacturers. The paste so obtained could, without danger, be worked up into cordite at Waltham. With regard to the three extra batteries, he had to explain that it had been found possible to make a fresh allocation of the money taken in the Vote for stores since the printing of the Estimates now before the House. They had been enabled to do this by the decision of the military authorities giving approval of a pattern of ·303 rifle, converted from the Martini-Henry weapons which had been superseded by the magazine rifle. Employment would be found at the Enfield factory on the work of this conversion instead of in adding to the store of magazine rifles, the reserve of which was regarded as ample. The arm so adapted would be submitted for practical trial, but there appeared to be no doubt that it would be regarded by the Volunteers as in every respect satisfactory.

Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) did not wish to criticise the statement of the right hon. Gentleman in a hostile manner, because he believed it would prove satisfactory to the Army and the country generally. The right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean had said that the Army here cost a great deal more than in Continental countries, but that was because the British was a voluntary army, and the Government were obliged to pay the ordinary rate of wages. He was sure neither the Committee nor the country would like to reduce the cost of the Army by reducing the wages.

*Sir C. W. DILKE: I went on to say that attempts had been made, notably at the Statistical Society, on more than one occasion, to separate that portion of the charges of the Army connected with the presence or absence of conscription, and that even when this was done, our Army was still dearer than Continental armies.

MR. JEFFREYS said, that of course the main cost of our Army was the cost of wages. With reference to the question of recruiting, whenever there was an increase in the number of recruits, it did not show that more people were wishing to enter the Army, but rather that a great many more people were out of employment. In the country districts many men joined the Army because of their inability to obtain work. The right hon. Gentleman, in his statement, incidentally mentioned that one of the most valued officers of the War Office had been obliged to retire on account of the system of compulsory retirement because of age. That was only a specimen of what happened to a great many officers of the Army, and there was nothing of which the officers complained so much as having to retire compulsorily at an early age. He hoped some readjustment would be made in the present system. It seemed absurd that because a man at the age of 45 had not become a lieutenant-colonel, that therefore he must retire from Her Majesty's service. At that age he was in the prime of life, and yet, because of the slow promotion that obtained in his regiment, he was turned out, and not only did they lose his services, but the country had to pay him a retiring pension. That seemed to him a most ridiculous thing, and one which would not be tolerated in any other industrial walk in life. Instead of being turned out at this early age, it was for the benefit of the Army itself that officers of such experience should be retained in the service, while there would be a great saving to the country, which would not then have to pay all these retiring pensions. He wished to call attention to the matter of deferred pay which was payed to the troops. He was quite sure that a good deal of that deferred pay, when it came to the soldiers at the end of 12 years, was absolutely wasted. When a soldier received £20 or £25 in his hand in one sum, he had never been in possession of such a large amount before, and he often spent it in a very rapid way. A case was in the police courts the other day in which it appeared that a soldier had drawn his deferred pay. Among his money he had two £5 notes; one of these was spent in about two hours in treating his companions, and the other would, no doubt, have gone in the same way had it not been purloined from him in a public-house. He thought some way ought to be devised by which the men should not get the money all at once, but should have it put in savings banks for use in their future life. The increase in the field artillery was, he thought, a most satisfactory feature of the estimates, but he would like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman intended to abolish the present depot, or to gradually increase the officers and men in forming these new battalions. He thought it was very important to know where we were to draw these men from. Each of these three Army corps were to have from 84 to 102 guns, but in the German or French Army corps they had 120 guns, and our Army, he contended, should be armed in exactly the same way as the Continental Armies. With regard to sickness amongst the troops, he believed the troops were never in a more healthy condition than now, but it was not very long ago since the War Office laid a sewage farm close to the hospital in the Aldershot camp. He believed this had been remedied now, but at the time it caused a great deal of illness, and showed great carelessness on the part of the military authorities. He should have to call attention to the cost of the forage and provisions at the right time, because it was admitted last year that 60 per cent. of the forage was foreign, and that a great amount of the meat came from abroad, and he thought this was contrary to the wishes of the general public of the kingdom. He believed the general statement with regard to the Army would be received with satisfaction by the service itself and by the country.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll) said, they were all competent to discuss the amount of the Army estimates, which was in the gross 21 millions. He would not say one word in disparagement of the officers and men of our gallant Army, but he thought that cost too much money. The wages, clothing, food, accommodation, and everything else for each soldier was about £56 per annum, and each soldier cost the country £125 per annum, as some £68 was spent in administering his affairs. He was glad that so many things had been done to increase the comfort of our soldiers, but he thought it would be better to spend more money on our Navy and less on our Army. He believed we could have as many men as efficient as at present for far less money, because the money at present was spent largely on drones in office, and not upon the working bees. In the interests of the taxpayers he protested against the system of extravagance, which required such an enormous vote.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) thought that denunciations such as those of the hon. Member were useless, unless suggestions were also put forward. He did not know whether the withdrawal of the troops from Cyprus was the beginning of a new policy, or a mere temporary arrangement, but in view of a speech made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other night, it seemed as if it was part of a definite policy of withdrawal on the part of the Government. He was told also that there was an intention of withdrawing a battalion from Egypt, and if so, that would be very dangerous policy indeed. He thought our forces there needed strengthening rather than diminishing at present. He did not think they had had a satisfactory answer to the point in regard to the Artillery, or rather the guns, raised by the hon. Member for the Forest of Dean. In regard to a small matter, which, however, affected the comfort of the soldier and the welfare of the Army, he would like to know whether some steps could not be taken, not to prevent marriages outside the ordinary married strength of the Army, but to warn the girls who married these men of the hard life to which they undoubtedly exposed themselves. He thought it would be possible to make it more generally known through the clergy and registrars, by means of the issue of some circular. He was glad to hear what his right hon. Friend said with regard to the gallantry and service done by the West India regiments. Was it not possible to extend that system of commendation a little further? We were extending our Empire, and bringing within its scope a great variety of native races, and it seemed to him that we were wasting a great reserve of material if we did not make some use of these men. They were men particularly adapted to the warfare in which this country often engaged, and a regiment or two of native troops in South Africa would be a valuable addition to the Forces of this Country. As to recruiting, he was much struck with what the right hon. Gentleman said as to the compulsory cessation of recruiting during the winter months, owing to what he considered to be an absurd regulation. It was a very absurd regulation that the War Office, during the period of winter, which, he believed was the time really to get more recruits than any other period, should deliberately, by a hard and fast rule, shut themselves out from the opportunity of getting the very men wanted for the Army. With reference to deferred pay, he was certain that the payment of deferred pay in a large sum when the men left the colours was a source of infinite mischief, not only to the men, but to the Army itself. He believed the system to be a sheer waste, and he offered the suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman whether it would not be better to pay the money by instalments, or add it to the actual pay of the men when serving with the colours. The system was established, no doubt, with a good idea, but at present it had the result, in the first place, of inducing the men to leave the colours as soon as possible. He thought it had also the very bad effect of discouraging certain men who might be very valuable in the Army by leading them to take the deferred pay on joining the Reserve. The money was squandered within a few months, and the money thus accumulated was of no good to the men. They were, indeed, left worse off than they were before.

*MR. WILLIAM WHITELAW (Perth), referred to the Yeomanry, and asked whether the allowance of £2 made to marksmen in the Yeomanry during the last two or three years was to be continued? As to the two days' preliminary drill, he showed that some years ago the Yeomanry troops were allowed to put in those two days' drill at the headquarters of the troops instead of at the headquarters of the regiment: now the system was reversed. The result was that it was impossible to get those portions of a squadron living far from the training ground conveniently together, so as to allow the men to be seen in their own districts. He belonged to a part of a Yeomanry squadron which lived over 20 miles from the district of training. If they were allowed to put in the two days' drill at their own headquarters they would probably gather a number of spectators to see the manœuvres, and thus give an enormous help to recruiting. Under the New Yeomanry Regulations, however, the troops could not show themselves for more than five minutes while marching through the streets of a town on the way to headquarters. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would consider whether he could not possibly relax the rule, which, though in many instances a good one, yet acted to the detriment of Yeomanry regiments in certain cases. On the point of the permanent staff he stated that there was an adjutant to three Yeomanry regiments. He believed that the adjutant belonging to the Cavalry was absolutely required for the training of a Yeomanry regiment. But the office work which he performed for the remainder of the year could be as well overtaken by an officer of the Yeomanry regiment, and a saving would besides be effected. It would, moreover, be generally to the advantage of the regiment if, instead of an adjutant appointed for five years, they allowed each regiment to have an adjutant appointed for the office work out of its own officers, while permitting an officer to be sent from the nearest Cavalry regiment to do the work of the adjutant at the annual training.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said that the points of detail which the hon. Member had brought forward were unfortunately not familiar to him at that moment, and he thought they had better be raised on the Vote itself. He would then be better prepared to give the information, and if his hon. Friend would communicate the points to him he would inquire into them. He had stated in his explanation that the contingent allowance would be continued on a footing to last for three years; £3 to be given for those who passed the third class, and £1 10s. for those who did not. The hon. Member for Guildford asked some questions as to the Cabinet arrangements for the control of the Army and Navy Services. He assented to the general principle which had been laid down by the present Leader of the Opposition, but as to the particular recommendation that there should be a Standing Committee of the Cabinet which should keep records, and have a professional adviser, that was a proposal which had never commended itself to him, and to which he would personally entertain considerable objection, more especially to the professional adviser. It was undesirable that any fixed institution of that kind should exist. The Committee of the Cabinet had full power to ask for any assistance it wanted, but he did not approve any permanent arrangement of that kind to include professional advisers. There was a proposal on the part of the Hartington Commission of a Council consisting of eminent professional men, and he agreed not to object to that particular paragraph of the recommendation, because it was hoped that there might be some advantage in the arrangement. He was not in favour of any rigid and stereotyped Committee of the Cabinet keeping records of their proceedings. This matter was now on such a footing that the necessity for an arrangement of this sort was greatly exaggerated. There was the Prime Minister, and the Ministers for War and the Marine; and there were other Ministers more or less concerned, such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretaries of State for India and the Colonies. These, or the first three alone, for certain purposes constituted a Committee of sufficient authority.

Mr. BRODRICK: I mean all meeting together.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said that, after all, people could consult without being called together. If three Ministers met in the Recess probably a great deal of time would be spent in discussing how they had been spending the Recess, and probably the business would be better attended to by the humble means of a despatch-box. On these grounds he did not think that it was desirable to overdo the necessity for a cast-iron scheme of a Committee passing down records from one Government to another. As to small-arm ammunition, the War Office, according to its competent advisers, stood very well in this respect now. There had been developed in this country a wonderful facility for supplying small-arm ammunition, and it was unnecessary to keep any exaggerated reserve, as the War Office was advised that it had a sufficient supply for its purposes now. As to the contribution of the Colonies, there was an inter-Departmental Committee now sitting, which he hoped would soon come to a conclusion. It dealt with principles which would apply to all the vexed questions—the Straits, Mauritius, and Hongkong—and there was every prospect of an early decision, which he hoped would be found to do equal justice between the reasonable demands of the Empire and the necessities of the several colonies. His right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean had taken large ground, and had discussed the whole organisation of the Army. The right hon. Gentleman had a most ingenious scheme of his own, which he put forward many years ago. With great good sense his right hon. Friend did not pin himself to the details of the scheme, and admitted that many parts of it might be open to amendment; and he referred to an alternative scheme put forward by Lord Roberts. Both schemes practically involved a separate and secondary—though not second-rate—army for Indian purposes. He himself was suspicious of all these schemes. Soon after he became Secretary for War, knowing of his right hon. Friend's proposal, and hearing that he might introduce it at any time, he obtained and always carried in his pocket an elaborate financial analysis of the scheme, showing the most portentous and appalling results to the British and Indian Exchequers. He was prepared to discharge this pistol at his right hon. Friend's head whenever he might happen to broach the subject: but, unfortunately, his right hon. friend had been so long quiet that he had left this pistol at home. An enormous number of men had devoted their time and attention to this subject, and none with greater intelligence or knowlege than the right hon. Gentleman. The War Office had innumerable schemes; but he for one did not feel equal to the task of even criticising these schemes at the present moment. He could assure the Committee that all these schemes had been considered and every one had been found open to certain objections. He admitted that the existing scheme was also open to objections; but it was a workable acheme, and one which answered its purpose. In the name of common sense let it be continued for a certain number of years, at all events, until the Army had become thoroughly accustomed to it, and until people had ceased to expect that it would be changed from one year to another. Then, if it failed to give expected results, it would be time enough to turn to another. As to the comparative costliness of our Army, it was not only conscription that entered into the calculation. In those countries where conscription was in force the whole resources of the country were laid at the disposal of the Army, and all the civil interests of the country were made to take "a back seat." When troops were moving, the whole of the passenger and goods traffic was stopped that the troops might pass, and that was only one of the instances out of a hundred where there was a great difference here. For everything here the military authorities had to pay heavily, and no advantage was given to them over the ordinary public. In other countries, the public was nowhere. Let the Committee conceive what an enormous difference that made in the cost of the Army; and it was a difference which it was almost impossible to assess. Our Estimates had at least this advantage—that, large as they were and swollen as they might appear to be, they at least brought to the surface the whole cost to the country of the Army. The private resources of the country lost nothing on account of the Army which did not appear on the Estimates; and the same could not be said of the Estimates of any of the great military Powers with which a comparison was made. The right hon. Gentleman had complained that cavalry regiments were stationed in towns. But with respect to the amusements of the officers and men, and the pleasure of the community, it would be very much more desirable if the cavalry could be kept in quarters where they could be submitted to constant training. But this was very difficult to accomplish. Little by little stations formerly used had been given up, though he would not say that the scheme could be carried out entirely.

The right hon. Gentleman was very anxious to have great manœuvres. This year the sum put down for manœuvres was £24,000, as against £20,000 last year, so that there was an increase. But large manœuvres on a grand scale could not be conducted in this country, because it was so much enclosed and so highly cultivated. To show how, not only the interest of the public, but the interest of private individuals, interfered with the necessities of the Army, he would mention that he was strongly urged by the military authorities to introduce a Bill dealing with the rights of the shooting tenant, because all manœuvres were hampered and interfered with in every direction, not by the agriculturists, who were very glad to see the soldiers, but by the shooting tenants. The question for him was how many shooting tenants there were in the House of Commons, and he thought it better to leave the question alone. That was the way in which manœuvres on a grand scale were prevented in this country. The hon. and gallant Member for Hampshire had made a most interesting speech on a subject, on which none could speak with greater authority than himself. He quite agreed with much of what the hon. and gallant Gentleman said; but the hon. and gallant Gentleman knew how difficult it would be to carry out a third part of his recommendations. As to his suggestion that the cavalry Reserveman's muscles would become too stiff for riding, he would point out that at any rate such a Reservist would be useful as a dismounted man in many duties where an ordinary Reservist would not do. As to campaign pensions, there were a number of men still who had not received them. But they were men who had no right to a pension, having preferred to give up their right by leaving the Army before the full time in order to seek civil employment. Some of them were now in destitution, and if they received pensions they were compassionate pensions altogether. What the Government proposed was a substantial concession—namely, that these pensions might be claimed by any man, eligible in point of service and character, who was over 65 years of age, or disabled by physical infirmity from earning his own livelihood. The hon. Member for Winchester had asked about the barracks at Winchester, and he could only say this matter stood where it did when last it was referred to. An officer of the Royal Engineers had made inquiries, but, as the hon. Member was aware, it was a question of getting additional ground. Then the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) had asked a number of questions. First he spoke of withdrawal from Cyprus, and to this the reply was that it was a military and not a political withdrawal. A military withdrawal because a wing of a regiment was stationed there, and nothing was more injurious to discipline than that a small body of men should be isolated from other troops. Therefore, it being shown that the withdrawal would be attended with no evil consequences, the wing had been ordered to join the regiment at Malta. There would still remain at Cyprus a few men to look after the building there. The hon. Member also referred to the withdrawal of a battalion from Egypt, and he need hardly say the very first thing would be to have the full consent of Lord Cromer. Subject to that condition, it would be safe to make the withdrawal.

MR. HANBURY: Has it been obtained?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, No; consent had not been absolutely obtained, but from correspondence, he had reason to entertain hope that it might be possible. The hon. Gentleman asked about postal payments. The other day he made a mistake when he said that any tradesman could cash the order. That, he found, was strictly forbidden, and for the reason that it might lead to the pawning of pensions. It was neglect on his part to give the answer he did, for which he apologised. There must be very few places so far from a post office that a man could not without great inconvenience get his order cashed, but he was making inquiries to see if any provision could be made to meet exceptional cases. The hon. Gentleman spoke of the desirability of not exceeding the establishment for the year. It was his personal opinion that it would be absurd to lay down a strict limitation. It arose from the old jealousy of a standing Army. What was really wanted was that there should be no serious excess, that the average should not exceed a certain number; a rigid application of the figures would have much inconvenience. The hon. Gentleman also spoke of the payment of deferred pay. The payment was now made at the time when a man left, and it was paid to his account in the savings bank, so that there should not be temptation to him to spend the money in debauchery among his comrades. At the same time a comparatively large sum would come into his possession, and the arrangement was made with a view to his having money for his new start in life. He hoped the Committee would now allow the Vote to be taken.

MR. BRODRICK: Can we take a general discussion on the next Vote?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Certainly. Not on the next, but on the subsequent Vote.

Vote agreed to.

£6,003,000 for Pay and Allowances Army (General Staff), Regiments, Reserves, and Departments.

GENERAL GOLDSWORTHY rose to speak.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby) appealed to the hon. and gallant Member to reserve his remarks for the discussion, which would be resumed at an early day.

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions reported; Committee to sit again on Monday.

SHOP HOURS BILL.

Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 and 3 agreed to.

Clause 3.

MR. BROMLEY DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield) asked if it was to be understood that this Clause was necessary, that there had been many breaches of the law.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) said: Yes; that was so. The Act passed last year had become quite nugatory. No penalty clause had been added for breach of the Act, which consequently had become almost a dead letter.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, then it was understood the Bill passed last year was incomplete, and consequently had now to be amended.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendments.

Bill read the Third time, and passed.

NAVY ESTIMATES.

MR. SIDNEY HERBERT (Croydon) asked what business the Government proposed to take on Monday.

THE PATRONAGE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. THOMAS E. ELLIS) said, the First Order would be the Committee on the Navy Estimates.

Sitting suspended at Five minutes to Seven o'clock.

EVENING SITTING.

The House re-assembled at Nine of the clock.

THE SHRINKAGE OF THE MARKETS AND BRITISH MANUFACTURES.

On the Motion that Mr. Speaker do leave the Chair,

***COLONEL C. E. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central)** rose to move—

> "That, whereas in the opinion of this House, the reduction both at home and abroad of former markets for British commodities by the unfair operation of hostile tariffs and bounties, and the unrestricted importation of the products of competing labour, working under entirely different conditions from those imposed by law and custom in the United Kingdom, is largely answerable for the numbers of unemployed and the diminished earnings of the people in manufacture, agriculture, and shipping, it is the duty of the Government to adopt without delay such measures as may ensure the defence of British industrial interests."

He said that want of employment in many trades and industries, as revealed by the evidence of the Select Committee now investigating the subject, and by everyone's personal observation, coupled with the depression in manufactures, agriculture, and shipping, was one of the most serious problems of the time. He was therefore surprised to see the Government Benches empty, and still more surprised to see that some of the few occupants of the Treasury Bench were already beginning to move out of the House. He might be wrong in the views he held, but he submitted that the present condition of affairs demanded the consideration, at least for a few hours, of the Legislature of the country. The fact that a large number of his colleagues on the Opposition side sacrificed all their private engagements in order to be present at the Debate showed that they at all events considered the subject to be one of the most important and serious that could possibly be laid before the country at the present time. It would not be denied that there were at the present time great numbers of unemployed. To his mind it was the most serious national question this country had to grapple with. That was the view of the Conservative Conference at Newcastle last November. *The Labour Gazette* issued that evening proved it. In 84 Trades Unions only a fraction of the whole, no less than 30,624 members were reported on February 28th as being without work and wages, or 7·6 per cent. without the building trade, while in 22 Trades Unions 10 per cent. were unemployed. The Local Government Board reported that on a single day last month 406,381 persons had been supported by the poor rates, and no less than 158,783 in London and West Ham. Trades Unionists in work were being called upon to deduct 5, 10, and even 20 per cent. of their wages due to their wives and families on Saturday night for the support of unemployed comrades. Their generosity was magnificent and worthy of all praise, but the burden of it was grievous, and it was not business. The Reports of all the Labour correspondents of the Board of Trade were in the same sorrowful direction. Oldham said : "There is no improvement in the spinning trade." Bolton : "The cotton trade remains depressed." Burnley reported : "The weaving industry has shown a further decline." Manchester : "The tailoring trade continues bad throughout. Letterpress and lithographic printers and bookbinders report trade as bad." Barrow-in-Furness said : "The pig-iron trade does not improve." And so on all along the line. The wages of upwards of 300,000 operatives had been reduced since November 1, and further reductions in nearly every industry were in contemplation, while thousands of pauper aliens were being admitted to swell the competition for employment in the labour market. A Select Committee had, it was true, been appointed to consider the extent to which distress arising from want of employment prevailed, and what steps could be taken to meet the distress. It had issued an Interim Report, which declared that in 454 localities with a population of 10,000,000 there was exceptional distress due to the severe winter, and in 144 localities with 3,750,000 people there was—

> "a want of employment owing to slackness of trade, depression of agriculture, or to particular local or industrial causes."

That proved the case. He need not argue it further, although he must add that the information of the Committee came solely from official sources, and all knew that they were always optimistic, and thought everything was for the best in the best of worlds, with good pay absolutely secured regardless of the state of trade, and the prospect of a good pension. His information came rather from the ranks of the honest, but unfortunate, men who were feeling the pinch in their daily life. The disease was there. Public charity and private philanthropy might alleviate it and soothe the pain it produced ; but what was wanted was a permanent cure — a remedy which would strike at the root of the epidemic, and put an end to a state of affairs which, aggravated by a few degrees of frost, reduced half the population and three-fourths of the producers to penury. The Select Committee had no immediate recommendation to make. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had assured him on February 28 that the Committee was to go—

> "into the whole question of the Unemployed, its condition, cause, and remedy ; "

and, as he had suggested, into the shrinkage of markets for British productions.

But the Chairman of the Committee had caused him to be informed that it had no such power. That was obviously so under the terms of the reference. The House must, therefore, take the matter into its own hands. That was the object of the Motion he should conclude by moving. It took note not only of the Unemployed. but also of—

> "the diminished earnings of the people in manufacture, agriculture, and shipping."

Was there an hon. Member who would deny the absolute truth of that proposition? The earnings of the people were not to be measured by the amount per piece or per hour paid to this or that especially lucky or skilful man. The only test was the amount and regularity of employment. Intermittent work was bad individually and collectively. With the volume of trade so much reduced as in recent years, the employment of the great artisan population had vastly fallen. Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Bradford, and Newcastle knew that but too well. What were the facts? There were two markets for British production—the Home and the Foreign. The Home Market ought to be the best, for it gave a profit at both ends, and was ours of right. But he would consider the other in the first instance. They had definite figures concerning it, but not as to the Home Market. British exports, as shown in the Trade and Navigation Returns for February 1895, were declared by the talented statistician who prepared the clear monthly summary for *The Morning Post* to stand at a lower figure than in any single month for many years past. They amounted to only £15,900,000 compared to £17,600,000 for February 1894, and £21,000,000 in February 1890. The fall since then had been as "progressive" as the rise in metropolitan rates under the County Council. All classes of exports—coal, textiles, and metals—showed a decline. For the year ending February 28 last the exports of British and Irish produce amounted only to £214,500,000 compared to £263,500,000 in 1890. The imports of foreign produce, after deducting re-exports, amounted in the last 12 months to £344,000,000, or 129½ millions more than British exports. There was a decline, it was true, of £14,000,000 in the imports. But it was in just the most valuable part of the importation — namely, of raw material for manufacture. The increase was in articles we should produce ourselves, in articles of food, and in manufactures. Of foreign manufactures, no less than £69,326,000 worth had come in during the past twelve months, an increase of £6,000,000 worth in four years, and of nearly £20,000,000 in 15 years, while 30 years ago the importation of these manufactured goods was only nominal, for then we made for ourselves and the world. This importation, free of Factory Laws, of Trades Union custom, the production of sweaters and convicts, was free also of the rates and taxes imposed on all articles of home production, calculated at 12 per cent. of their value, and had entailed a loss in wages to the artisan population of considerably over £30,000,000, or sufficient to provide £100 a year to 300,000 families. He could go into much deeper detail. But it was not necessary and time did not allow. The condition of the cotton trade, the most important manufacturing industry, had very recently been the subject of comment in that House. It had been said to be deplorable. *The Sheffield Telegraph* of last Saturday described "the outlook in the iron and steel trades as gloomy," and said—

> "the worst point has not yet been reached. There is a lack of confidence in commercial circles which is assuming alarming proportions."

The able writer of the "Political Notes" in *The Times*, said the other day, on undeniable authority—

> "Owing largely to the crippled condition of the tin plate trade, one third of the operatives have during the past two or three years been permanently unemployed, and the remainder intermittently so. A large percentage have been reduced to a pitiful plight."

Hon. Members representing agricultural constituencies on that side of the House had urged, and would urge, attention to the awful decline in that which should be our greatest industry. On an importation last year of agricultural products exceeding £142,000,000, *The Field* calculated that £108,000,000 represented articles of food which the soil and climate of this country were suited to produce. The value of the foreign butter, cheese, and eggs imported, had alone nearly been £23,000,000. The Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture had obtained reliable data showing—(*a*), That the gross value of the whole land of the United Kingdom had fallen in the last fifteen years by £13,400,000; (*b*), That rents had been reduced from 5 to 75 per cent.; (*c*), That the wheat crop which averaged £31,000,000 from 1870 to 1875 had fallen in 1894 to £7,600,000, and the whole corn crops from £70,000,000 to £30,000,000, a loss of £40,000,000 a year to the occupiers of arable land in 20 years; (*d*), That the land under corn had been reduced by 2,000,000 acres since 1873, and 4,000,000 acres had been laid down to permanent pasture; lastly, That between 1871 and 1891 the number of agricultural labourers employed on the land had fallen 28 per cent., or by more than a fourth. Mr. Giffen estimated the loss in money value of the agricultural products of the United Kingdom between 1874 and 1891 as £76,000,000 a year, and Mr. Martin Sutton, whose authority would not be disputed had put the reduction of the breadstuffs, grown in the country for the food of the people, at 44 million bushels in 20 years. *The Daily Telegraph* truly asked—

> "Is the British farmer to perish without an attempt being made to save him?"

One word only as to shipping. The loss of profit was but too well known to shipowners and sailors. The shares of many companies stood at a depreciation of from 50 to 75 per cent. The figures laid by Mr. John Williamson of Liverpool before the Chamber of Shipping the other day showed—

> "that in 1894 all articles of export show decreases, and mainly such as are of greatest value and employ most labour in their production—namely: Yorkshire goods, worsted, woollens, flax and jute goods, iron, tinplates and machinery amounting, excluding coal, to a decline of 474,000 tons; showing a loss in linen and jute goods of 15,000 tons, in woollens and worsteds of 19,000 tons, in machinery of 11,000 tons, in iron, pigs and rails, &c., of 257,000 tons, in tinplates of 25,000 tons, of copper manufactures 9,000 tons."

This proved that the decline was not merely a question of price. It was sometimes averred that the Merchandise Marks Act and other legislation to stop fraudulent trading, and therefore abhorred by foreign manufacturers and their agents in this country, many of whom tried to voice English opinion at the London Chamber of Commerce, had destroyed the transit trade. But, unfortunately for this argument, it had increased by £8,000,000 between 1886, the year prior to the Merchandise Marks Act, and 1892, and by 117,000 tons in 1894 over 1893. So much for the present condition of affairs. Permit him shortly to consider what was one of the principal causes. There might be some depression in other countries, but it was nothing like so acute as in England, and if it were two wrongs did not make a right. For instance French exports in January and February this year showed a gain of 60 million francs over 1894. Depression in other countries, even if it existed, did not prove us to be prosperous. The Chambers of Commerce of Sheffield, Birmingham, Bolton, Bristol, Cardiff, Newcastle, Nottingham, Stockton, North Staffordshire and other great manufacturing places, had this week in London declared these disastrous consequences to be due to the operation of hostile Customs tariffs. The superior voting power of such fashionable centres as Torquay, Tunbridge Wells, and a few comparatively unimportant places, had thought otherwise it was true. But the weight of industrial, if not mercantile opinion, had undoubtedly been in favour of the affirmative view, which the hon. Member for Islington, the President of the Chamber, had pronounced "a truism." The President of the Iron and Steel Institute had declared recently—

> "We have lost the greater part of the Continental trade owing to protective tariffs. The gravity of the situation demands the closest consideration of commercial men and of statesmen. We may well look anxiously round to see where the markets for our produce and employment for our workmen and capital are to come from."

In an admirable book by Mr. Williamson, of Edinburgh, entitled, *British Industries and Foreign Competition*, and published by Simpkin, Marshall & Co., the opinion was quoted of Lord Beaconsfield as to the impossibility of fighting hostile tariffs with free imports, and comparing the struggle to that of a prize-fighter and a galley-slave in irons. The truth of this had been absolutely proved by the progresssive and continuous growth of hostile tariffs directed mainly against British trade. He would show the House this by an illustration. Against those Manchester goods, a sample of which was on a card he produced, the French duty in 1860 was 12½ per cent., in 1882 16 per cent., in 1892 and now 42 per cent. Against those Leeds goods the duty in France was in 1860 10 per cent., in 1882 32½ per cent., in 1892 and now 50½ per cent. France snapped her fingers at British remonstrance, although we buy of her thrice as much as we sell—a nice balance of trade. The whole world, including British Colonies and dependencies, was in arms against our trade with foreign tariffs and foreign bounties, and we were trying to fight with free imports. It was hopeless. We had not the power of a mouse in commercial negotiation, for we had cast aside all our bargaining power. Why, even little Bulgaria the other day put up the duties against us, and we had not been able to do anything to restrain her. It was absurd and ridiculous. As Mr. Gladstone declared at Leeds in 1881—

> "If you are to strike, you ought to strike hard. If you are to make the foreigner feel, you must make him feel by striking him in his largest interests."

Were the right hon. Gentleman there he would have urged him to arouse his colleagues and say to them, as he had said in the House of Commons on February 13th, 1843—

> "Hon. Gentlemen surely do not wish to displace labour at home by the employment of labour abroad."

He would have reminded him of his dictum—

> "The cry of cheap bread, considered by itself, means nothing that is necessarily beneficial to the labouring classes. We must look to their relative means."

This was analogous to the saying of Dr. Johnson—

> "It is no purpose to tell me that eggs are a penny a dozen in the Highlands. That is not because eggs are many, but because pence are few."

He commended this view to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade in their exultation over the fall in prices and cheapness, including, as it did, cheap wages. The President of the Board of Trade told the Associated Chambers of Commerce on Wednesday evening that he saw blue sky in the commercial atmosphere. The only blue sky other men could see was the advent of the Conservative Party to power. He also said—

> "That trade with the United States was decidely a reviving trade."

From what source did he derive his information? Not from the Board of Trade statistics. In 1890 the British exports to the United States had been £32,000,000. In 1893 they had been £23,000,000. In 1894 the American purchases of British goods were not much more than half what they were in 1892, and not one fourth of the British purchases of American goods. Did the President of the Board of Trade rest his optimism on this Wilson tariff? It's author, the favoured guest of the foreign-rival-loving London Chamber of Commerce, had been defeated at the polls, and the Democratic Congress which had supported him sent to the right about by the voice of the great majority of the American people. No, there was no prospect whatever of free imports being sanctioned by the Americans or French, by the Germans or Russians, by Italians or Spaniards—by any self-governing community on the face of the earth. In 1844 Mr. Cobden said—

> "You have no right to doubt that in ten years from the time when England inaugurates the glorious era of commercial freedom, every civilised country will be free traders to the backbone."

That was 50 years ago. We had waited and waited in vain, and should wait no longer. We should think of our own people, of our own country, once the workshop of the world. As the previous day's *Times* declared,—

> "We are still excluded from many valuable markets by tariffs."

Some one might ask, who paid Customs duties? The answer was clear. The consumer, if the imported articles did not compete with a home industry, like the duty on tea, coffee, currants, tobacco and wines, which give us so-called Free Traders £20,000,000 a year, or more than any other nation received of fiscal revenue, and all raides on the wrong articles. But if the imported articles competed with home industries, then the producers or exporters paid the whole or part. ["Proof?"] Yes, he would give proof. The great firm of Sutton and Sons, of Reading, were informed the other day that they must cease to send mangel seed to France unless they lowered their prices to the extent of the rise in the French Customs duties. They had had to accept the situation and pay the duties by lowering the price even to an actual loss, or forfeit their connection. The President of the Iron and Steel Institute had shown how in January an English firm had tendered for steel rails wanted at Oldenburg. The English had to include the Import Duty of 25s. 6d. a ton and the cost of the carriage in the price. Goods sent to New York had to be delivered free of duty. The Englishman paid, and it was taken out of English wages. Then, in addition to the free market we gave the foreigner here with no return, in addition to throwing away all bargaining power for the reduction of foreign hindrances to British trade, in addition to giving the foreigner a positive advantage in our markets of at least 12 per cent., thus destroying the home market for the British producer, in addition to encouraging English capitalists to invest their money abroad and not at home, Foreign Governments gave bounties on shipping, on the production of sugar, &c., amounting to some £20,000,000 a year. Was this fair play? He must not longer detain the House. It was for the interests of Britain and British industries that he pleaded. American and French favoured competition was at the bottom of the present dispute in the boot trade. He might be asked for a remedy. It was for the Government to find the remedy. It was their duty. It was the purpose for which they were appointed and paid. The House had only to point the way. Let them look at the facts and grasp them. Turning the other cheek to the smiter and twiddling our thumbs for 50 years had done no good. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, the biographer of Cobden, declared at Oldham not long ago that—

> "If the productiveness of the land were increased, the condition of the labourer bettered, and more remuneration obtained by him for his toil, the effect would be that the agricultural population would have so much money to spend and there would be a more active demand for the things which manufacturing towns produced."

The President of the Board of Trade said on January 24th:—

> "The steady depopulation of rural districts, and the inordinate accumulation of masses of people in a few great centres, is to be profoundly regretted on many grounds.

That very week the Minister for Agriculture had professed to be anxious to encourage home production rather than foreign importation. The opportunity was now, if the will were present. Let the Government note the decline in our exports to foreign countries. They showed the injury done us by their tariffs. They amounted to £195,000,000 in 1872, and had fallen in 1893 to £146,000,000, although we had had many millions of additional mouths to feed. The only compensation lay in the increased demand for British goods by British Colonies and dependencies. In 1851 it amounted to only £20,000,000; in 1891 to £87,000,000. In this Colonial direction much remained to be done. Canadian duties on British yarns amounted to 25 per cent.; on woven 22½ per cent. In Australia the duties were higher. In South Africa there was a uniform duty of 12 per cent. All these Colonies offered us better terms than foreigners if only the Government had the courage to say to Germany and Belgium—"We must alter the half-dozen words in the Treaties between us by which you prevent us trading advantageously with our own kith and kin." But let the Government especially consider what would happen, where would be their boasted cheapness, if, for a day, the command of the English Channel fell into foreign hands? The illustrious father of the Speaker had declared in 1842 that—

> "He certainly would not be a party to any measure the effect of which would be to make this country permanently dependent on foreign countries for any considerable portion of its supply of corn."

On those grounds, as on the others he had mentioned, he would respectfully ask leave, in the presence of the equally-illustrious and greatly-beloved son of Sir Robert Peel, to move the Resolution which stood in his name, and which his hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, a great undivided borough greatly affected by the present State of affairs, would second.

Mr. H. SETON-KARR (St. Helens), in seconding the Motion, said, he entirely endorsed the remarks of the Mover. There were three separate interests, three sets of individuals affected, namely, the consumer, the capitalist producer, and the wage-earning producer. Improved transit and competition all over the world, assisted the consumer to defend himself. The capitalist producers could, to some extent, look after themselves by removing their capital to other countries, but the 13,000,000 of the wage-earning classes were absolutely helpless in the existing stagnation and depression of trade; they could not remove themselves and their families to other countries. It was said by some that if the British working-man would consent to work for lower wages, he would be able to get plenty of work; but from that doctrine he dissented. If our system of fighting hostile tariffs with free imports was fundamentally wrong; where was the reducing of wages to stop? A 5 per cent. reduction to-day meant a demand for another 5 per cent. reduction to-morrow. He was inclined to sympathise with men who struck against reductions in wages, which would ultimately land them in barbarism and industrial servitude. Therefore, the wage-earners wére entitled to more consideration than the small number of capitalists, who could proteet themselves. The first of two points on which he desired to lay stress was, the great decrease of our domestic exports. Let anyone compare our present condition with what it was in 1870–71–72. At that period, in two years, our exports went up no less than £57,000,000. But during the four years 1890–94 the exports of our domestic produce had decreased by the enormous sum of £47,000,000. Some said this was accounted for by the fall in prices; but it could not be wholly accounted for in that way; and, indeed, such an enormous sum must he accounted for by decrease in quantity. In 22 years, the population had increased by £7,000,000; but the exports for British workshops in that time had fallen £40,000,000. It was said that other nations were suffering equal depression. The excellent book which had already been referred to, "British Industries and Foreign Competition," showed that during 20 years the domestic exports of other civilised countries, with the exception of France, had increased, on the average, by 47 per cent.; while this country, excluding exports of coal and machinery, which ought not to be sent away to enable other countries to compete with us, had increased its domestic produce only by 4 per cent. In the face of these figures, could it be said that other nations were suffering as much as we were? Taking the average per head of the population, our domestic produce had gone down from £6 per head in 1872 to a little over £5 in 1894. We were losing our markets abroad. That would not affect the wage-earning classes if there was a corresponding increase in our markets at home; but in the past 20 years we had doubled our imports of manufactured articles. Our imports of food stuffs reached £150,000,000, considerably more than double what it was 20 years ago. And symptoms of the great national disease was the transfer of industrial capital from this country to others; there were firms, some of whose members had seats in that House, that had so transferred their capital. In his own constituency, a large firm of glass-makers had transferred a part of their business to Belgium, where they were employing the people of that country. He did not complain of the men who did this; but he did complain of the system which compelled them to do it. The book mentioned reproduced the following passage from the Report of Mr. Porter to the United States Government:—

> "I found shoddy manufacturers from Batley and Dewsbury established in Aachen, Prussia; Lancashire and Scottish spinners in Rouen; Leicestershire hosiery manufacturers in Saxony; Yorkshire, wool-combing establishments in Rheims; Dundee jute mills in Dunkerque; all-wool stuff manufacturers in Roubaix; English iron and steel mills in Belgium; and English woollen mills in Holland. Removing English Capital to the Continent has secured a profitable home market, while England was near with widely opened ports to serve as a 'dumping ground' to unload surplus goods, made by foreign labour, superintended by English skill. In this way the English markets are swamped and her labour undersold."

This state of things was predicted by Sir Lowthian Bell in 1890 in his presidential address to the Iron and Steel Institute. He said:—

> "Cottons, woollens, rails, machinery will be produced as heretofore and in overflowing measure; they may be even produced by Englishmen, or by men of English race, as now; but they will be produced by them, not in Lancashire, Staffordshire, Lanarkshire or Yorkshire, but on the banks of the Ohio, at the foot of the Alleghany, or it may be in even more distant quarters still."

SIR F. H. EVANS (Southampton): Would the hon. Gentleman say from what book he is quoting?

MR. SETON-KARR said he was quoting from a book entitled "British Industries and Foreign Competition," by A. Williamson. The same author said:—

> "Brains and Capital will go where the best return is to be found, and if, as free traders contend, our fiscal policy provides the freest scope for the exercise of both, how does it arise that so many of both, whom it is said to benefit, flee from it to get under the sheltering wing of the one so directly opposed to it?"

Whereas other countries were spending all their energies and capital at home, we were doing our best to drive them abroad. He thought he had said enough to supplement what his hon. Friend had said to shew the magnitude of this industrial crisis. He wished now to deal for a moment with the latter part of the Resolution. It was not the business of private Members to recommend a remedy to Her Majesty's Government, but he wished to say a word from his point of view on the remedy suggested. There was only one way to protect industrial interests and that was by altering our fiscal system and adopting reciprocity. They would probably—those who advocated such a step would probably—be called protectionists. If protection meant putting on Import Duties regardless of what other nations were doing, if it meant putting a duty on the food supply and raw material, then he was not a protectionist; but if it meant fighting foreign countries with their own weapons in order to get free trade all round, then he was a protectionist. Free Trade meant free exports as well as free imports; but as a matter of fact we had not got Free Trade at all. We had only a sort of bastard Free Trade. We had free imports, but no free exports, and he submitted it was time we followed the example of other nations and fought them with their own weapons. He and his friends advocated fighting hostile tariffs with import duties, in the first place, because the history of the past 40 years, and especially of the last 20 years, was dead against our present system. Every prophecy of Cobden and Bright was unfulfilled. Other countries had not followed our example; trade was declining, agriculture was ruined, and we had lost trade where others had gained it. Other nations did not believe in Free Trade. In 1874 we first adopted fully the policy of free imports for competing goods. What happened? In 1879 Bismarck took advantage of this opening. Finding the German mills and factories languishing at that time, he raised the tariffs against other nations, and especially against us, and the result was that German mills and factories were running full time while many of our wage-earners were starving. In 1892 France doubled the duty on cycles. We were the only nation affected by that hostile tariff, and it was absolutely certain that in a year or two we should find our French trade killed, and France would be sending cycles into this country. Which policy did the Government think the men who earned their living by making cycles would support? The policy which allowed the trade to be ruined, or the policy which said we should fight hostile tariffs by import duties until we brought other nations to their senses? It was said that reciprocity would cause other nations to raise their tariffs against us; but there were only £60,000,000 exports on which they could increase their tariffs, while on the other hand there were no less than £219,000,000 on which we could retaliate. The advantage on our side would be as three to one. They might be told that reciprocity, or, as some called it, retaliation, would be an act of industrial war. Well, if we were attacked by armies and fleets, we could only meet the attack with armies and fleets. We were being attacked by hostile tariffs, and the time had come when we ought to fight other nations with their own weapons. They would be told from the Ministerial side of the House that reciprocity, or protection, as some hon. Members would say, would result in a tax being put upon food. He was not prepared to advocate any tax upon food, at all events, at present, but if any hon. Member should tell his confiding constituents that they enjoyed a free table and loaf, he would be guilty of a grave error, for food was heavily taxed at the present moment. Much was said now about "sweating." Ask the British farmer and the agriculturist who was being sweated—the foreign producer who sent his supplies to this country and paid no taxation, or the home producer who was being taxed to death? The result of the present system was that there were in this country between six and seven million acres which were growing nothing but weeds, that 500,000 labourers had been driven off the land, and that 30,000 farmers were insolvent Reciprocity would enable us to form a vast commercial union with our Colonial Empire. There was the example of the United States. Inside the boundary fence of the States there was absolute free trade; outside commerce was guarded by a wall of protection. He had never seconded any Resolution with greater confidence and pleasure than he felt on the present occasion. This question certainly interested the working men of Lancashire, Lanarkshire, and Yorkshire more than any other. The time was not far distant when the wage-earners of this country would take the matter into their own hands and would compel the Government to do what they were asked to do in this Resolution.

MR. HERBERT PAUL (Edinburgh, S.) wished the right hon. Gentleman the Father of the House had heard the speeches delivered that evening. What would that illustrious man think when he should read these utterances, proclaiming the doctrines that we could tax the foreigner, and that if our markets were restricted the remedy was to restrict them still further. The hon. Member who had seconded the Resolution stated that he would not propose a tax upon food. Why not? Was not agriculture the most depressed industry in this country at present? And if Protection was the right remedy, surely, the first commodity on which a duty ought to be imposed was corn. That was the staple food in this country. Some hon. Gentlemen with, he would not say more courage, but more inconsistency than the Member for St. Helens, said that the capitalists of this country were transferring their capital to industry abroad. Still he did not blame them, he blamed the system. What system? [Hon. MEMBERS: "Free imports."] The systems of Free Trade [Mr. SETON-KARR: "One-sided Free Trade"]—a system which stood between the working classes of this country and the alternative of starvation and beggary. The hon. Member for Sheffield thought this country was being impoverished because it got more for its own labour than it received formerly. Perhaps he could convey by means of a simple illustration the nature of the process which was apprehended. The hon. Member for Sheffield no doubt had a tailor. He would put the hon. Member into the position of this country, and his tailor into the position of the foreigner. He would put the clothes the hon. Member received in the shape of imports and the money he paid for them in the shape of exports. Supposing his tailor's prices gradually diminished and the number of clothes which he received for a £10 note—not many—gradually diminished. Would the hon. Member apprehend that the result of that process, if carried on for a sufficiently long time, would reduce him to destitution? Rather he should say, the hon. Member would find that Mr. Poole would be glad to accept that view of the situation, and to act upon it to his own advantage. Did hon. Gentlemen think that when this country adopted Free Trade other, countries then adopted it also? Free Trade was adopted in the face of hostile tariffs, on the principle that the best way to fight hostile tariffs was by free imports. Did we admit the goods of foreign countries for the sake of conferring a benefit upon them? Why, of course, we admitted them for our own sake, and for the sake of nobody else. How were they paid for? In sovereigns? ["Hear, hear," from Mr. JAMES LOWTHER.] Then where did we get the sovereigns? We did not produce gold in this country. Did the right hon. Gentleman really suppose that a sovereign or any sort of foreign commodity could be got into this country without being paid for by the produce of British labour?

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. PAUL hoped, then, the right hon. gentleman would explain what was the extraordinary philanthropic motive which induced foreign countries to flood us with their goods for nothing. At this time of unfortunate depression in trade—a depression which had been more severely felt in every protectionist country in Europe than in our own—every sensible man was endeavouring to find new markets for British trade, and every new market of British trade involved an increase in the foreign commodities which were imported into this country.

MR. F. G. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham): How are these imports paid for?

MR. PAUL had the greatest pleasure in telling the hon. Member for Peckham how these foreign goods were paid for. They were paid for by the labour of this country, and every diminution in foreign trade would add to the number of the unemployed, and increase the misery which, unhappily, to a certain extent prevailed even under our system of Free Trade. While he held Free Trade was good for all countries, in all circumstances and at all times, there never was a country and never a time when any departure from Free Trade would be more disastrous than in this country at the present day. Hon. Members talked as if purchases from abroad were a great disaster to this country. Well, what was the logical conclusion of that? Stop our foreign trade altogether. What, he should like to know, would be the result to the people of this country of putting an end to our foreign trade? A state of indescribable and unimaginable disaster. The speech of the hon. Member for St. Helens was based on the argument of the disadvantage of getting abroad what they could get at home. But what had been the fundamental principle of Free Trade which had been accepted in this country for half-a-century? That some things were better made at home and other things were better made elsewhere. The second part of the Resolution was that they should fight bounties with Import Duties. If foreign countries imposed bounties, such imposition was injurious to their own trade. Was it injurious to us? What harm did cheap sugar do us? There had been times in this country when periods of distress coincided with very high prices, and did the working classes suffer less then than they did now? Periods of distress, great as was the suffering that was always entailed, were infinitely less onerous and disastrous when the prices of the necessaries of life and the staple commodities of industry were low. It might be said that prices could fall to a point where there was no profit and the industry must cease. Yes, but there was a very simple way of ascertaining when that point was reached. When that point had been reached the volume of trade must fall. The volume of trade had not fallen. The hon. Gentlemen talked about the decline of imports as if that was a disaster, but they had not attempted to show that there had been any appreciable falling in the volume of trade. He remembered a report issued in 1892 or 1893 by a Committee of the Chamber of Deputies in France. That Committee was appointed to inquire into the causes of distress in France, and its members found it was due to two causes—want of a sufficient system of Protection in the French Republic and the persistent prosperity of England. Both hon. Gentlemen opposite had said that it was for the Government to find a remedy, and not for them. But there was no mystery about the remedy. The system about which the hon. Gentlemen complained was a system of absolute Free Trade with all the world, and the remedy for that system was a more or less modified system of Protection. Why it should be modified he had never been able to understand. If Protection was a good thing, it would seem to him that the more they had of it the better, and the idealist Protectionist system would be that the population of this country should be absolutely dependent upon what could be produced within the limits of the United Kingdom. The hon. Gentleman, in his very picturesque phraseology, said we had been twiddling our thumbs for 50 years. He supposed that meant that they had adopted that great financial system upon which the prosperity of this country had grown, and upon which, whatever temporary wave of depression might come upon us, she had attained and maintained a position which there was nothing like in the former history of this country, and which there was nothing like in the rest of the world now. This was no academic question; this was no question of abstract economies. Speaking as one who represented as many working men as the hon. Member for Sheffield, he said that this was a question which affected every working man in this country. If the proposals of the Mover and Seconder of this Amendment were adopted we should see a state of misery and distress such as had never been known in these islands. There were political questions which excited great interest and passion, and even fierce animosity, such as the questions of Disestablishment and Home Rule. However they might be decided, this country would retain its place among the nations of the world. But there were two questions upon which the prosperity of the British Empire and the comfort and welfare of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom depended. Upon the answer they gave to these questions, upon their upholding the principles which these questions involved, depended everything which to an Englishman, Irishman, or Scotchman was dear. These two principles were the steady maintenance of an invincible Navy and a resolute, unfaltering adhesion to the principle of Free Trade.

Sir HENRY H. HOWORTH (Salford, S.), after a complimentary allusion to the speech of the hon. Member for South Edinburgh, observed that as one representing a constituency comprising a very large proportion of helpless working men who, possibly more than those of any other constituency, were suffering from the various causes of depression, he desired to say a few words in this Debate. That afternoon he asked a question of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and received a very plausible answer from the right hon. Gentleman, which seemed to him to be very misleading on this very issue. His question was as to the increase in the deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank and the consequences likely to arise out of that increase, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that this must be a subject of great congratulation to everybody in the House, because it proved that the working people were getting thriftier and richer. He, himself, held quite a different opinion. The reason why the working people, in the county of Lancashire, at all events, were investing their savings so largely in the Post Office Savings Bank—where the rate of interest was so low as to be almost contemptible—was because other and more profitable avenues of investment had been closed to them owing to the shrinking in trade and the consequent greater difficulty that poor men experienced in advantageously placing their money. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had asked whether it was true that our imports, which had increased at such a tremendous rate, were not paid for by the products of English labour, and he went on to show that this increase in imports proved how vigorous and prosperous English labour must be Could any greater or more misleading fallacy be put before the House? Why nearly two-fifths of the imports into this country were paid for, not by the profits and wages of English labour in this country, but by the profits of English capital invested in other countries. It was the investment of money in Peruvian mines, and in foreign industries by large English capitalists in Continental towns, where they found it profitable to build mills and manufactories to enter into competition with our own trades—it was those profits which were pouring into this country wholesale, that enabled us to buy this great mass of imported material with which we were being flooded, and with which every small shop in every little village throughout the country was being filled. When the Government spoke on this question he hoped it would be faced on these lines—that the increase of imports into this country, instead of being a measure of the prosperity of our industries, was rather a measure of the facilities and the profits that were being so lavishly made by English capitalists abroad by the employment of foreign workmen. What he contended was—that cheap commodities were an entirely misleading value of the happiness of a community living upon wages—that it was the securing of a competent wage which was the first element in the problem. What was the good of cheapness to a man who had no income, or what was it worth to a man who had a large income? To a rich man, whether a 4 lb. loaf was at one price or another was of little importance; the real question to a man was that he should have a sufficient income to buy that 4 lb. loaf at all. This continual exaltation of cheapness at all hazards, meant, he supposed, that eventually the product of Chinese labour, which was the cheapest labour of all, was to displace English labour, which was the dearest labour of all. Was that a prospect of future prosperity? There was another fallacy which had been put forward, and it was that a tariff must inevitably increase the prices of commodities within the country where the tariff was levied. But where money was very cheap the profits upon commodities were measured by the normal rate of interest that was paid for capital in that country, and if that normal rate of interest was very low there was no industry which could exist, without an enormous competition, that showed a profit a little in excess of that rate of interest in that country; and, consequently, the internal competition within the wall of the tariff necessarily, and in all cases, reduced the prices of commodities to the people living within the wall of the same level, or nearly the same level, that they would be under conditions where there was no tariff at all. From inquiries he had made of large American producers, he had been told that money being cheap in America, and capital flooding every industry, the prices of commodities within the tariff there were little in excess of the prices of commodities in places outside that tariff. They contended that the supreme factor in this matter was to secure a continuous income for their own operatives, and that it was an utterly misleading issue to tell the working man that in securing that wage by putting on a tariff they were going to increase the price of the commodities he would have to buy. That would not take place under any circumstances, except in countries where the rate of interest on money was very high, and where it did not pay for capital to flood those industries in which there was virtually no competition. Consequently, then they would have a monopoly, and with a monopoly very large profits, and then enhanced prices. Wherever the rate of interest was small they inevitably had, whether there was any tariff or not, the prices of the products of manufacture reduced to a level very little indeed above the level in which those commodities could be produced in those countries where there was no tariff at all. It seemed to him that they were being misled by some of those extremely plausible statements which had been made over and over again by the advocates of an unrestricted free trade. English labour had burdens placed upon it—some of them very properly by that House to enforce education and sanitary conditions of life—which foreign labour had not to bear at all; and yet at the same time, this foreign labour, which had no burden on its back, was to have the free and unrestricted right to compete with English working men. The problem was very different now to what it was years ago when competition was comparatively unknown. The introduction of machinery had largely done away with individual initiative, and the inevitable result was that the Hindoo, the Chinaman, and the Japanese, all of them men of great skill and tactical dexterity, were able in almost every handicraft to produce materials quite as good, as tasteful, and as finished as those produced by our own workmen. These men had precisely the same power of managing machinery as our own workmen, and yet, owing to conditions of climate and of food, they were able to live on an income on which an ordinary Englishman would starve. English workmen were told that it was a great gain to them that English capital should be transferred to India, China, and Japan, because, although they would have no employment and no wages, everything they consumed would become wonderfully cheap. The time had come when it would not be possible for optimists to speak with a light air about these great issues. So long as machinery was the special possession of this country we could defeat the world; but our monopoly in this respect was rapidly ceasing. Machinery was being exported in all directions, and at this moment the only industries in Lancashire that were prosperous were those connected with the manufacture of machinery for exportation. We could not prevent this exportation, and yet every machine exported must have the effect of excluding English competition in the country to which it went. With equal facilities for production, industry must go where labour was cheapest. It would not be the profits of capital, but the level of wages that would give one country the advantage over another. That meant that barbarous labour was going to exclude the labour of civilised men. By the distribution of machinery, and the fuel that was to feed it, they brought into competition with English workmen, burdened terribly with rates and taxes, the natural consequences of our civilisation, people to whom civilisation meant an income of a few pence a week, with which to buy enough rice to feed them and the two yards of calico which formed their clothing. He could not agree that it was possible to apply this remedy to one kind of industry only. They could not possibly in the ultimate event give protection to one part of industry if they were not prepared to give it to the rest. Their object was not to make things dear, but to supply an income to men who were now starving.

Working men knew and felt that if they were getting 30s. a week in nominal wages and out of that could only work three days a week, it would be a vast deal better for them to pay ½d. more for their 4 lb. loaf. He stood upon this, that the remedy they wished to apply did not involve, and could not, except in very poor countries involve an addition to the price of commodities in the country. The competition of capital naturally brought down the prices of commodities. It was an interesting fact that, although the price of wheat had come down to almost exactly one-half of what it was, the quartern loaf was now almost exactly what it was when wheat was at double its present price. It had been no advantage to the working man that the price of wheat had come down in the way it had, because almost the entire difference had gone into the pockets of the middlemen. It would have been a vast deal better for the working men and for other classes in this country if a little of that difference had gone into the pockets of the farmer and the labourer instead of into the pockets of middlemen. In these matters people were being misled by arguments which a little discussion and analysis would put an end to. He could refer to other commodities in regard to which the same state of things existed as in the case of wheat, but wheat formed an illustration that was most familiar to everyone. He hoped that presently, when an answer was given to the arguments brought forward in support of the Motion, the House would not hear mere optimistic phrases such as they had just listened to from the last speaker, but that the real question surrounding this very difficult subject would be faced. He spoke now as he had spoken for nine years in Manchester. His conviction was that he was a Protectionist. He was not a free-trader. He believed that every kind of fallacy that human ingenuity had invented had been accumulated round the fetish of free trade, before which so many hon. members opposite knelt and worshipped. It was for this reason that he had intervened in the present Debate.

*MR. R. J. D. BURNIE (Swansea Town) desired to refer to the figures in regard to coal, to show that in that article at any rate there had not been a falling-off in exports. In 1880, the quantity of coal exported from this country to foreign countries was something over 17,000,000 tons, whereas, in 1894, the quantity had risen to more than 33,000,000 tons. One other point he wished to refer to. The hon. Member who moved the Resolution had not treated that side of the House quite fairly. A Member who brought forward an important Resolution might give them some idea of the remedy he would propound in order to get rid of the evils which they all admitted this country was suffering under. The real reformer's duty was not only to point to the disease, but to propound the remedy. The first question he usually put to Protectionists was: "What are you going to tax?" The ground was, however, cut from under his feet on this occasion by the hon. Member who had just spoken, as he said he would tax everything. The hon. Member was out and out; he was frank; in the most bold and unusual manner he declared himself a real Protectionist. If he were asked for a remedy, he thought he should begin by requiring some reduction in the rents of the country. He should then want to move out of the way the royalties that were paid. He should want to reduce some of the excessive ground rents, not only in urban districts, but on manufactories. Let him point out one of the conditions that a manufacturer had to deal with. He was going to speak of a case with which he was well acquainted. Thirty years ago there was a piece of land which was sandbank and bog which was utilised for the purpose of establishing a large manufactory. The land at that time was of no value. The parties who took the land for 60 years spent £40,000 to £45,000. Half the time of the lease had now expired, and a large portion of that value was rapidly passing to the ground landlord. In addition to this rent, had been paid amounting with compound interest to about £10,000, and it would thus be seen that the manufacturer who had to compete with foreign manufacturers had been mulcted in an enormous sum for the use of what was a valueless piece of land. He ventured to think that if they got rid of some of these charges, if it would not cure it would help to enable manufacturers at home to compete with manufacturers abroad, and so increase our trade and employ our workmen. But it was not only a question of rents. If the agricultural interest was prosperous, they might look for a large amount of prosperity in every other department, and they were all willing to co-operate in bringing about that improvement in agriculture. Whilst, therefore, he thought there was still room for lower rents to be paid, it was not only that they had to deal with. There were other matters. He had before him a copy of a lease of land which was now in existence, and he wanted to refer to some of the conditions imposed on the farmer who rented the land. The hon. Member then read some of the conditions of the lease, which amongst other restrictions limited the cultivation of certain crops, stipulated what manures he should or should not use, regulated the sale of produce, the cutting of trees, and the keeping of premises in repair. He marvelled how any farmer, under conditions of such a lease, could go on a farm with any chance of success. What hope had he of improving his condition and removing his difficulties with such a mesh of impossible conditions surrounding him? Hon. Members on the other side would do good service, if they would help in removing some of the real causes of commercial distress which he had indicated, and give up the futile attempt to upset our policy of Free Trade, to which was mainly due the commercial supremacy and greatness of the Empire. It would be impossible for hon. Members to convince the working men of this country of the unsoundness of the principle that if we were to keep our trade at all, it was only by freeing the channels and not by damming them up.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet), thought he would hardly be justified at that late hour in going into the very interesting question raised by the hon. Member. He and his hon. friends had been asked what would they tax? The hon. Member for Salford very properly said that he would place no imaginary limit to the articles to be taxed. The hon. Member for South Edinburgh asked whether they would tax wine. He did not think that the most ardent advocate of the productions of this country would claim any pre-eminence for that manufacture. What they desired to tax was competing products—that was to say, articles which this country could manufacture or produce in considerable quantities. He had not, of course, any preference for prohibitive taxation; but he had always advocated, so far as the necessaries of life were concerned, the imposition of duties based on the principle of a sliding scale which would automatically operate when that figure was attained which would, by general concurrence, represent that price at which the article could be produced in this country. By such a means all famine prices could be absolutely averted. They were always told that the idea of any country in the world being able to compete with the United Kingdon was absurd. The President of the Board of Trade was aware that at this moment the pig-iron manufacture of the Southern States of America—Alabama—was being landed at Glasgow at a price lower than that at which it could be produced at a profit in the great iron-producing centres of the United Kingdom. A large employment of negro labour was one of the elements in the manufacture of this iron, and no doubt yellow labour was also one of the elements which the English working man would have to contend against in the future. The House was told by the hon. Member for South Edinburgh that goods were always paid for by goods. Then, if German prison-made brushes were sold in England, there would be a greater demand in Germany for British manufactures. Would the hon. Member for South Edinburgh endorse that view? But the House of Commons had unanimously decided that that competition between foreign prison labour and English labour should not continue; and did the Chancellor of the Exchequer suppose that if the competition had been that of black or yellow labour, instead of prison labour, the decision of the House would have been any different? The public opinion of the working classes was decidedly set in the direction of protecting their labour from such competition. How did the hon. Member for South Edinburgh make out that goods were always paid for by goods, seeing that this country's imports very largely exceeded in value the exports?

*MR. HERBERT PAUL: It is because of the very good bargain we make.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER said, that it was pointed out to him that money must leave this country to pay for the goods imported in excess of the exports. But the answer of the Free Trader was that the interest on British capital employed abroad must be brought into the calculation. Yes, the interest on British capital driven from this country.

*COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: Twelve hundred millions.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that of course his hon. and gallant Friend was responsible for that figure, but he had no doubt that, if anything, it was under the mark. This British capital had been invested abroad for the purpose of getting beyond the range of these hostile tariffs. It was reducing argument to an absurdity to regard British capital driven abroad by the falsity of our fiscal system as a source of British revenue, while it was paying wages to the foreign workman to the detriment of the English workman. That argument would not influence the starving operatives in the Government centres of industry in this country. Those who advocated the imposition of reasonable duties upon foreign competing produce, were not without feasible suggestion for protecting this country from any danger of scarcity in her supply. Her Majesty's Government recently sent a Commissioner (Lord Jersey) to attend the Colonial Conference at Ottawa. What was the suggestion of the assembled delegates there? That facilities should be afforded throughout the British Empire for inter-British trade upon preferential terms; and that certain Treaties should be renounced with the view of once more enabling this country to have a free hand in the arrangement of affairs within the limits of the Empire itself. The hon. Member for South Edinburgh, in a strong appeal to the House, had spoken to two things as essential to the British Empire—a strong Navy and Free Trade. What was the attitude of the British Empire towards the one-sided Free Trade which the hon. Member advocated? Why, nine-tenths of Her Majesty's subjects were dead against it. He would undertake to say that nine out of ten of her Majesty's subjects were dead against it. He did not confine himself to the limits of these islands. He was afraid the right hon. Gentleman opposite (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) was developing into a Little Englander. The inhabitants of these islands were only about a tenth of her Majesty's subjects, and throughout the other portions of the Empire these falsely so-called free-trade doctrines were denounced.

SIR W. HARCOURT: But the predominant partner.

MR. LOWTHER admitted that, but the other partners had not adopted the same fiscal policy. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Mundella) made a sound and gesture indicating derision; but did he doubt that, with the solitary exception of the United Kingdom, her Majesty's subjects were in almost every part of the Empire of protectionist principles? Then the right hon. Gentleman acquiesced in the statement?

MR. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): That nine-tenths of the British Empire are protectionist?

MR. LOWTHER said that was his statement. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman meant to exclude India, but after the recent discussion he would not be inclined to follow up that argument. At all events all the self-governing portions of the Empire except the United Kingdom had at one time or other in recent years pronounced in favour of protectionist principles. The only exception that could be made was New South Wales, but into that there was not time to enter—which colony had modified its tariff in a way that did not carry with it the good wishes of the right hon. Gentleman. Foreign imports and hostile tariffs against the produce and manufactures of this country had forced on the public opinion of this country that some decided steps must be taken to remedy the present state of affairs. If the Government could only offer the cold comfort the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian offered to the Cobden Club the last time he addressed them, then there would be great and deep disappointment among the toilers of this country. The Government were asked for a policy, and they were found mumbling the dry bones of political economy.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said, he had waited for an expression of opinion from the Front Opposition Bench, and had not waited in vain. If the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Lowther) represented the Front Bench——

MR. LOWTHER: I represent myself.

MR. BRYCE said, then the silence of the Front Opposition Bench was the more significant. The hon. Member for Sheffield (Colonel Howard Vincent) in the earlier part of his remarks said that the only hope of agriculturists and manufacturers in the country was the advent of his Party to power. Did he still retain that view?

*COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: Certainly.

MR. BRYCE: Though not a single Member of the late Government came to support the hon. Member's Motion? Did he still retain that view when remembering that during six years the late Government made no movement in the direction of such a Motion?

*COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: Trade was too good then.

MR. BRYCE said the hon. Member's recollection must be short indeed if he thought trade was good in 1891–2.

*COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: In 1890.

MR. BRYCE said, the hon. Member did on one occasion succeed in surprising, he supposed he must not call it a Conservative caucus, into a declaration on this subject at Oxford. A resolution similar to this was carried, but the first result was a prompt disavowal—what might be called a "hot potato" disavowal—from Lord Salisbury, and he ventured to predict the same result from the carrying of any other resolution of the kind. Free Trade principles had never been more fully set forth than by the President of the Board of Trade under the late Government (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), and if the Conservative Party had any idea that such a proposition as was embodied in this Resolution would be carried into effect by a Conservative Government, they were very much mistaken indeed. He could not help noticing a sort of *crescendo* in the speeches of Members who had supported the Motion. The hon. Member for Sheffield complained of the evils, but suggested no remedy; he was followed by the hon. Member (Mr. Seton-Karr) who proposed to draw from its scabbard the sword of retaliation, and then was reached the higher level on which the hon. Member (Sir H. Howorth) and the right hon. Gentleman avowed themselves thoroughgoing Protectionists. The hon. Member for Salford did not shrink from the proposal to protect food and agricultural produce, and the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken would carry this policy so far as to prevent British capitalists from investing money abroad or lending money to industrial enterprises in foreign countries. The hon. Member for Salford did not quite go so far as those who wrecked machinery 60 years ago, but he looked with grave disfavour on the export of machinery and coal, because he thought those commodities would enable our competitors abroad to succeed. But to return to the Motion before the House, had the hon. Member who moved it succeeded in proving the propositions on which it rested, or in holding out the slightest hope of success by the remedies at which he was apparently driving? The hon. Gentleman had evidently had a great deal of trouble over that Motion. It had appeared in three successive shapes. In the first shape it suggested no remedy at all; in the second it advocated the preferential tariffs of the Ottawa Conference; and in the third it confined itself to saying that the Government ought to take measures, but what measures had not been at all indicated by the hon. Member. The hon. Member said: "It is not for me to suggest measures; that is for the Government." But why had not the Conservative party suggested measures? The only Members of the front Opposition bench present were the hon. Member for the Ecclesall Division of Sheffield and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet, and apparently it was from them the future policy of the Conservative Government on this matter was to be taken. The hon. Member for Central Sheffield in his Motion ascribed the increase in the number of the unemployed to the shrinkage of foreign markets and the operation of foreign hostile tariffs. In a paper published in 1894, called "Statistical Tables relating to the Progress of the Foreign Trade of the United Kingdom and other Countries," this subject was fully and instructively discussed; and it showed that under the operation of Foreign tariffs the trade of the country, so far from declining, had actually been increasing. Despite those foreign tariffs, the foreign trade of this country had increased; had held its own with the trade of other countries, and this country had as firm a grasp of the general trade of the world as in any previous time. The next point of the hon. Gentleman was as to bounties. Would the House believe that foreign bounties were given only on sugar and on shipping. Sugar was not a great industry in this country. It employed only about 9,000 people and had not suffered substantially from foreign bounties. But what was more instructive still was that an attempt was made by the late Conservative Government to deal with the sugar bounties. A Congress met in 1888—hon. Members would find in the Blue Book all the correspondence that had been exchanged on the subject—a Convention was actually signed, but the Conservative Government never took any further step in the matter, and the whole thing had remained dead till this day. So much for dealing with foreign competition by retaliation. Then as to shipping, surely if this country held a conspicuous position in the world for anything it was for its shipping. If bounties were a danger to us, least of all could they be shown to be a danger to an industry so eminently successful as shipping. The Motion said that the earnings of the people had diminished. Earnings might be tested by wages, and the House knew that wages had risen nearly double in the last 50 years, and within the last 30 years they had increased 25 per cent. The wages of agricultural labour, in particular, had risen steadily over the whole country until with the last few years. If hon. Members would refer to what was said by the Commission on the Depression of Trade which sat a few years ago, and the *data* of the Labour Commission, they would find that this statement was borne out. There had been a steady and continuous advance in the character of our industrial population. The values of our products had been maintained and the quantities enormously increased. Even now, in the unfavourable returns for February, the diminution in quantity was very slight. In the prices of food and clothing and almost everything (except house rent) which was necessary for the well-being of the people there had been a very marked, steady diminution. In 1880 the consumption of pounds of tea per head was 4·57; in 1890, 5·17; in 1893, 5·41; in 1894, 5·53. The consumption of sugar, which in 1880 was 63·4 pounds, had risen to 80. The consumption of tobacco had risen from 1·42 per head to 1·69. Then to take the question of meat, which was perhaps more important still, he found that within the last 20 years the consumption of meat in this country had increased per head of the population no less than 25 per cent. Something had been said about the competition of the products of labour produced under conditions less favourable than ours. To that he would reply that the better you pay a man the better worth you get out of him, and every improvement in the *status* of our working classes—shorter hours, lower prices, and higher wages, had been followed by an improvement in the quality and quantity of the work which was turned out. There was nothing more true than that cheap labour was dear labour. Those who desired that we should not have our labour competed with by that of foreign workmen working under different conditions must adopt one of two alternatives; either they must exclude foreign manufactured products altogether, or they must ask to repeal our Factory Acts and go back to the state of things which prevailed 50 years ago. The hon. Member for Sheffield assumed an increase in the number of the unemployed, but he had given not a tittle of evidence on the subject, and, setting aside the exceptional circumstance of the hard frost, there was evidence that the number of the unemployed as it stood at Christmas last was distinctly less than it had been two years before. In regard to pauperism, they had statistics to show that in 1857 no less than 4·86 per cent. of our population were paupers in England, and in 1862 no less than 5·43 per cent.; but in 1893 it had fallen to 2·45 per cent. That under the policy of Free Trade this country had thriven was the opinion of those who knew most of the country. Only on Wednesday last a gentleman from Sheffield brought forward a Motion at the meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce couched in much the same terms as the Motion before the House, and it was rejected by 40 to 26—by a large majority of those who had reason to know what were the conditions of commercial prosperity and what was for the real commercial benefit of this country. He hoped he had shown that the hon. Member for Sheffield had not attempted to substantiate any of the arguments he had advanced. As to suggesting any remedies for what he deplored, he was a perfect blank. Periods of depression pressed less on Free Trade countries than on those in which protection prevailed. The hon. Member for St. Helen's wanted this country to imitate the United States in his protective policy. Did he not know that the depression in trade had been much more severe in the United States, and nearly in every part of the Continent of Europe where protective tariffs prevailed, than in this country? He would appeal from the hon. Member for St. Helen's, who urged that we should fight other nations with their own weapons, to the hon. Member for Sheffield himself, who said we ought not to follow the blind leading of other nations. The Government were absolutely firm against any kind of protection or fair trade, by whatever name it might be called or in whatever disguise it might masquerade. He need add nothing to the admirable speech on the general question, of the hon. Member for Edinburgh. It had been by a free trade policy that the greatness of this country, commercially, had grown during the last 50 years. The Government believed that by that policy the commercial greatness of the country would, in the future, be promoted and maintained, and they did not believe a responsible Government would ever be found to propose or a British Parliament be found to sanction any return to the doctrines of protection.

The House divided:—Ayes, 105; Noes, 35.—[Division List No. 26.]

COMMISSIONERS OF SEWERS OF THE CITY OF LONDON (BATHS AND WASHHOUSES) BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 was agreed to.

On Clause 2,

Mr. CRILLY (Mayo, N.) said, he knew nothing about this Bill, and therefore moved to Report Progress.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) appealed to the hon. Member not to press the Motion, as the Bill was not in any sense a contentious one.

Mr. CRILLY: I have such a high appreciation of the honesty, democracy, and decency of my hon. Friend that I withdraw the Motion.

The other Clauses were agreed to, and, the House having resumed, the Bill was read 3°.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

On the Order for the Third Reading of this Bill,

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said, that the Bill was sent to a Standing Committee, and was now, after a few days' interval, set down for Third Reading. He objected to this rapidity of procedure, and intended to give notice that the Bill be recommitted to a Committee of the whole House.

***Mr. SPEAKER** pointed out that the Bill had been Reported by the Standing Committee without Amendments.

***Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON** (Preston) moved the Third Reading of the Bill, but objection having been taken he named the 19th of June for that stage.

Order accordingly postponed.

BOARDS OF GUARDIANS (IRELAND) (CONSTITUITON AND POWERS) BILL.

On the Order for the adjourned Debate on the Motion for the committal of this Bill to the Standing Committee on Law (13th March),

Mr. D. CRILLY said, that as the right hon. Member for West Birmingham and the right hon. Member for East Manchester had pronounced an opinion unfavourable to this Bill, he should ask leave to withdraw it. He, however, threw the whole responsibility for the loss of the Measure upon the two right hon. Gentlemen whom he had designated.

***Mr. SPEAKER** said, that the Order being for the resumption of the Debate on the Motion for committing the Measure to the Standing Committee, the Bill could not be withdrawn now. The Motion must stand over until another day. Before the Bill could be withdrawn the Motion must be withdrawn.

Order postponed.

House adjourned at Fifteen minutes after Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 18th March 1895.

Private business only.

The House adjourned at Twenty-five Minutes before Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 18th March 1895.

The House met at Three of the Clock.

QUESTIONS.

VENEZUELA.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if any progress has been made towards the resumption of diplomatic relations with Venezuela, and the abolition of the differential duty levied by that Republic upon the British Exports from Trinidad?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): No progress has been made.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can make any further statement as to explanations from the Government of Venezuela in reference to the recent hauling down of the British flag on British territory and forcible abduction of British police officers and men by Venezuelan armed forces; and whether, in the event of there being no reply as yet from Venezuèla, Her Majesty's Government have fixed, or will fix, a specific date after which further measures will be adopted if no satisfactory explanation be given?

*SIR EDWARD GREY: I cannot at the present moment add to the answer which I gave last week, but the matter will not be allowed to drop without proper reparation being secured.

FOREIGN SUBSIDIES AND FREE TRADE.

GENERAL GOLDSWORTHY: On behalf of the hon. Member for Wandsworth, Mr. H. KIMBER, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) whether he is aware that the German Government are, by granting subsidies to certain steam shipping lines and rebates on railway carriage for German goods for the express purpose of competing with English Free Trade to our own Colonies and South Africa, thus driving many descriptions of English goods out of these markets; and, (2) whether the Government will take steps, by negotiation or otherwise, to prevent action by Foreign Powers which may be hostile to British trade with various parts of the world.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): The Board of Trade are not aware that English goods are being driven out of the markets of our own Colonies and South Africa from the cause mentioned in the question. As respects the second paragraph of the question, Her Majesty's Government do not believe that negotiations with Foreign Powers would be likely to have the effect desired by the hon. Member, but they do believe that the policy of Free Trade followed by this country is, so far as their own action is concerned, the policy best calculated to promote in the future, as it has promoted in the past, British trading interests throughout the world.

CO-OPTING GUARDIANS.

MR. C. BILL (Staffordshire, Leek): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether it is necessary for a board of Guardians, when co-opting Guardians under section 20, sub-section (7) of the Local Government Act, 1894, to ascertain whether any of the magistrates, who had at any time acted as *ex-officio* Guardians, were willing to serve; and, if so, whether they have a preferential claim to be chosen, although they may not have attended board meetings regularly for the past year or two.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): Any additional members elected by a Board of Guardians from outside their own body must, at the first election, be persons who have actually served as *ex-officio* or nominated Guardians of the Union, if a sufficient number of these persons are willing to act. No limit of time is prescribed within which a Justice must have served as an *ex-officio* Guardian of the Union in order to entitle him to be thus elected.

THE BERRIEW EDUCATION SCHEME.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester:) I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the opinion of the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight and Mr. Edwardes Jones, that the Order in Council of 12th December 1894, as to the Berriew Scheme, was made contrary to the Act of Parliament, and whether it will be at once withdrawn?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): I have been furnished by the noble Lord with what is no doubt the essential part of the opinion alluded to. If there is no objection I should be glad to see the case and the opinion. I have mentioned in an earlier answer that the action taken was based upon precedent, including the case of Dauntsey under the late Government, and that the matter was not referred to me. I propose now to refer the whole matter to the Law Officers, and if it should appear that the practice has been taken in error by this and previous Governments, I will take the best advice as to whether rectification is possible, and, if so, by what means.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE remarked that the time when the Vote on Account was to be taken was very close, and he was afraid it would be impossible for him to forego the opportunity that Vote would afford of raising the question. Would the right hon. Gentleman say how soon he expected the reply of the Law Officers would be given?

MR. ACLAND said he would refer the question to the Law Officers as soon as possible, and he expected they would reply as speedily as they could.

FACTORY INSPECTORS AND SHUTTLES.

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that factory inspectors have expressed different opinions on the question whether the words "machine" and "machinery" in the Factory Acts include shuttles; and whether he will issue instructions that these words, properly interpreted, include shuttles; or, if not, whether he will undertake to provide for the matter by an Amendment to the Factories and Workshops Bill.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): It is the practice in cases where complaint is made, that shuttles are a source of danger to persons employed, to treat shuttles as coming within the terms of "machine" and "machinery," to take the proceedings which are appropriate to prevent the use of dangerous machinery. There have been nine prosecutions during the last 12 months for not providing shuttle guards, with convictions in each case. So far as we know there is no necessity for issuing any instructions in the matter.

RAILWAY SERVANTS AND COLOUR BLINDNESS.

*SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) whether it is obligatory on railway companies to subject experienced guards, drivers and signalmen to eyesight tests for colour blindness; (2) whether it has come to his knowledge that a railway company in Scotland has adopted a theoretical test which men have failed to pass who have never mistaken the semaphore arms and flags by day or lamps by night, as practically used in railway working; and that notices of dismissal have been given to a number of old servants of the company, thus causing great uneasiness and alarm amongst the railway *employés*; and (3) whether this is consequent upon any action of the Government or any order issued by the Board of Trade?

Mr. BRYCE: Railway companies are not legally compellable to subject their servants to eyesight tests for colour blindness. The facts referred to in the second paragraph of my hon. Friend's question have not come to my knowledge. Having no powers, the Board of Trade have made no order, The subject is, however, one of great interest and importance to the companies and the travelling public, whose interests obviously require that adequate tests for colour vision should be applied. In 1892 the Board of Trade communicated to the railway companies the Report of a Committee of the Royal Society on Colour Vision, and corresponded with the companies in order to ascertain what action they had taken or proposed to take to test the colour vision of their servants.

NIGER PROTECTORATE.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the promised inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the recent troubles in the Niger Protectorate will be conducted by some authority invested with powers to summon witnesses and take evidence on oath?

Mr. THOMAS BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the inquiry promised by the Government into the Native rising at Brass will be open to the public, and evidence taken on oath, with power to enforce attendance of witnesses?

*Sir EDWARD GREY: I cannot yet say what precise form the inquiry will take.

Mr. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will ascertain the quantity of spirits the Royal Niger Company sold for consumption by the natives in the years 1893 and 1894, and the amount of revenue received by the Company from such sales?

*Sir E. GREY: The only revenue for administrative purposes is derived, not from the sale of spirits, but from the duty paid upon spirits when imported either by the company or other traders. In spite of the great increase of general trade since the Charter, the average annual importation of spirits has been only one-fourth of that prior to the Charter, and of the total trade of the company's territories not more than 12 per cent. is done in spirits.

THE REFORMATORY SHIP "CLARENCE."

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he is now able to make any further statement as to the conclusions come to after the inquiry into the condition of the reformatory ship *Clarence.*

Mr. ASQUITH: The conclusions are substantially that there was a failure on the part of the Committee to visit the reformatory ship *Clarence* with sufficient frequency and regularity; that with regard to the outbreak of smallpox which occurred in November last, the Secretary of State is of opinion that no blame is attached to the captain for insufficient precautions having been taken; but after carefully considering the Report and evidence, he thinks the responsibility must rest with the medical officer, and he has expressed to the Committee his opinion that they should reinstate the captain in command of the *Clarence*, and he trusts that steps will be taken by the Committee in future to prevent the recurrence of the condition of things which has necessitated the recent inquiry.

THE ZETLAND PIER, ADRIGOLE.

Mr. JAMES GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, (1) whether he is aware that Mr. Jackson, the county surveyor for the West Riding of the County Cork, visited the Zetland Pier at Adrigole; (2) whether he directed a man to spread gravel over it, and that the man had to desist from doing so owing to the tide rising two feet higher than the pier; and (3) whether, seeing that this is the only landing place from Glengarriffe to Trafrask, with the road leading to it, a distance of 12 miles, and that sand and seaweed belonging to the farmers of the district are frequently being washed off the pier, he will take steps to have this pier raised to a proper height in order that it may be useful to the people of the Adrigole district?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The County Surveyor visited this pier, as stated, and ordered the contractor to replace the gravel which had been washed to the back of the pier. I am informed there are two good harbours for landing sand between the points mentioned in the third paragraph. The County Surveyor will make application at the next road Sessions to have the pier paved.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN COUNTY LIMERICK.

Mr. J. FINUCANE (Limerick, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, (1) whether his attention has been directed to the great delay in proceeding with the scheme for labourers' cottages at Hospital, Kilmallock Union, County Limerick; (2) if it is a fact that an inquiry into this scheme was held nearly four years ago by the Local Government Board, and the scheme has since been sanctioned by the Privy Council; and (3) when will the arbitrator visit Hospital and make an award?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The facts are as stated in the second paragraph of the question. I am informed, however, that the Guardians have not yet taken the necessary steps for the appointment of an arbitrator. I shall make further inquiry in the matfer.

CANADIAN CATTLE.

Colonel WARING (Down, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether, on or about the 17th December, 1894, a report was received at the Foreign Office from the British Consul at Antwerp, that two shiploads of Canadian cattle, landed at that port a few days previously, had been found to be suffering from pleuro-pneumonia, and that most stringent orders had in consequence been issued that no further cargoes of Canadian cattle should be permitted to land in Belgium; and, if so, whether the Minister of Agriculture was at once informed of the fact?

***Sir EDWARD GREY**: A report to this effect was received from Acting-Consul Lydcotte on the 29th December, and was at once sent to the Board of Agriculture. I am informed that the Colonial Office also communicated the same information to the Board of Agriculture immediately.

FROST, AND WATER SUPPLY.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, if, having regard to the widespread inconvenience caused in many districts of London by the recent freezing of water pipes and deprivation for several weeks of the supply of water to many houses, he will appoint a small departmental Committee of experts to ascertain by what means such an occurrence can best be prevented in the future, and how it has been met by the several Companies?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I am fully sensible of the inconvenience which has been caused in many districts of London by houses being deprived of water owing to the recent frost; but I feel great difficulty in instituting an inquiry of such a general character as that suggested, especially as there would be no means of enforcing the conclusions arrived at. I must point out, however, that, on the assumption that the failure of the supply of water is due to the fact that the water has been frozen in the companies' mains, and that this has been due to the pipes being laid at an insufficient depth to guard against frost, the Legislature appears to have provided a course which may be adopted by those affected. The Metropolis Water Act, 1852, enacts as follows:—"If at any time complaint as to the quantity or quality of the water supplied by any company for domestic use be made to the Local Government Board by memorial in writing, signed by not less than 20 inhabitant householders paying rents for and supplied with water by the company, it shall be lawful for the Board at any time within one month after the receipt of such complaint to appoint a competent person to inquire into and concerning the ground of such complaint, and to report to the Board thereon. If, after the receipt of such report, it shall appear to the Board that the said complaint is well founded, the Board shall give notice in writing thereof to the company. After the receipt of such notice, the company shall, and they are hereby required within a reasonable time to remove the ground of such complaint." I am advised that the provisions which exempt the water companies from penalties where the failure of a supply of water is due to frost do not affect the provisions above referred to. If, therefore, a complaint is made to me by 20 householders in any district in London, I shall be prepared to entertain it, subject to the opinion of the Law Officers, which in so grave a matter I should think it my duty to take.

Colonel **HOWARD VINCENT** asked, whether a memorial, if addressed to the right hon. Gentleman, would entail any expense on the part of the 20 persons?

Mr. **SHAW-LEFEVRE** said, that the expenses of the person whom the Department would appoint would be paid by the Local Government Board, but the complainants would have to make out their case before the person was appointed.

Mr. **J. AIRD** (Paddington) asked whether the inquiry would be extended to all other cities where great inconvenience had been felt?

Mr. **SHAW-LEFEVRE**: No; as far as I know, the section I have referred to applies only to London and not to the parishes outside the Metropolis supplied by the London water companies.

Mr. **M. BIDDULPH** (Herefordshire, Ross) asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the allegation that ratepayers in London who had paid their water rates in advance had no remedy against the New River and other Companies which had failed to supply them for 55 days during the late frost, and since, he proposed to take any steps to remedy this state of things?

Mr. **SHAW-LEFEVRE**: I think, if the premisses of the hon. Member are accurate, that the question is well worthy of consideration in any future legislation affecting the water companies.

Mr. **J. H. DALZIEL** (Kirkcaldy Burghs) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that in some districts of London no water had been supplied for over a period of six weeks, and that intimation had been given that no water need be expected for another month?

Mr. **SHAW-LEFEVRE**: I have already dealt with the subject in answer to a previous question.

JABEZ BALFOUR.

Mr. **C. J. DARLING** (Deptford): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the extradition of Jabez Balfour has been granted or decided on, the proceedings at Salta notwithstanding?

*Sir **EDWARD GREY**: The Vice-Consul and police officers have gone to Salta in expectation of the surrender of Jabez Balfour. They should arrive there to-day, and will communicate by telegraph.

Mr. **DARLING** asked whether the hon. Gentleman had any information as to the probable extradition of Jabez Balfour, or whether his information was limited to the fact that the officers had gone to Salta?

*Sir **E. GREY** said, that the officers had gone to Salta in expectation of the surrender of Jabez Balfour. They would communicate by telegraph from there, and as soon as they did so he would be glad to give the information.

LUNATICS.

Dr. **KENNY** (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the great increase in the registered numbers of the insane during the five years ending 31st December, 1893, he will grant the Return relating to Lunatic Asylums which stands on the Paper this day?

Mr. **ASQUITH**: The Lunacy Commissioners will be glad to furnish the Return.

OCEAN DERELICTS.

Mr. **J. C. MACDONA** (Southwark, Rotherithe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that on the 14th instant Captain Taylor reported at Queenstown having sighted the American three-masted schooner *Florence J. Allen*, with only the lower part of her mizen mast standing, abandoned by all on board, in latitude 36.30 N., longitude 37.38 W., and on the next day sighted another derelict in latitude 36.11 N., longitude 63.25 W., that both these derelicts were drifting in the track of Atlantic steamships, and were most dangerous to navigation; and will the Board of Trade order the Trinity Board to send in search for these dangerous derelicts, or, failing this, arrange with the Liverpool Tug Company, who succeeded recently in finding the derelict *Loch Maree* and towing her into Belfast Harbour, to do so?

Mr. BRYCE: I have communicated with the Collector of Customs at Queenstown, and find that Captain Taylor, of the ss. *Yoxford*, who arrived there on the 13th instant, did not report to him having passed any derelicts. I may add that, according to the report published in the London *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette* of the 14th instant, the *Yoxford* only passed one derelict, the name of which is unknown. This was on the 25th ultimo, and in latitude 38.11 N. and longitude 64.25 W., which does not agree with either of the bearings given by the hon. Member. I can scarcely think that the hon. Gentleman is serious in suggesting that the Trinity House should send in search of a derelict which three weeks ago was in the neighbourhood of Bermuda. As to the Liverpool Tug Company, I can only refer him to my reply of the 4th instant.

CAGE ACCIDENTS.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been drawn to the verdict of the jury in the inquest on the bodies of the seven men who were killed owing to the snapping of the rope of the cage by which they were descending the shaft of the Snailbeach Quartz Mine, Shropshire, on the 6th instant, namely, that the rope had not been properly looked after and had been used too long; whether he is aware that it was given in evidence that the rope had not been changed for eight years, and had not been repaired; and that John Lee, a mining expert of 30 years' experience, swore the rope was very badly corroded internally, and was not capable of carrying its own weight; and if he can state what steps the Home Office propose to take in the matter?

Mr. ASQUITH: I have not yet received the necessary information to enable me to answer my hon. Friend's question, and would be glad if he would put it down again for some other day.

THE BRISTOL CHANNEL PORTS.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what (if any) steps are being taken by the Government to make provision for the protection of the coal ports in the Bristol Channel in the event of war?

Mr. J. C. Macdona.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs): The Bristol Channel has already a powerful defence in batteries and mine-fields, and provision for a new battery in the neighbourhood of Barry Docks appears in the present Estimates. As money becomes available, some of the armaments will be modernised, but other ports are held to be in more immediate need of protection. I may add that the proximity of the strongly-fortified naval base of Milford Haven confers a security on the Bristol Channel which is wanting in other cases. But the importance of the defence of the ports in question is fully recognised.

Mr. J. D. BURNIE (Swansea Town): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the associated Chambers of Commerce at their meeting last week unanimously decided that defensive works are required for the protection of the Bristol Channel coal ports?

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No doubt it is essential to have additional protection for the Severn, but the Severn and its estuary are not nearly so exposed to attack as certain other places round the coast to which we are devoting our attention. The Severn will have its turn when its turn comes.

THE WELSH CHURCH BILL.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is intended by Clause 6, Sub-section (1) (a), of the Established Church Wales Bill that the amount of £976 6s., given in Return 240 of last Session as being derived by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from ground rents in the parish of Aberdare, is to be vested by the Welsh Commissioners in the Aberdare District Council, or whether it will form part of the central fund, to be applied, in the first instance, towards payment of the expenses of carrying the Act into operation, and subject thereto to purposes for the benefit of Wales generally?

Mr. ASQUITH: The ground rents to which my hon. Friend refers, not being attached to a parochial benefice, will come within the operation of Clause 9, paragraph (b), and therefore will be appropriated in the manner indicated in the second paragraph of his question. I may, however, remind him of the duty imposed upon the Commissioners by Subsection (2) of Clause 9 to pay due regard to the wants and circumstances of the parish in which the property is situate, and to the circumstances of each particular case.

COLONEL MITCHELL'S CLAIMS.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he received, about the 22nd November, 1894, a Petition of grace, with a letter, from Colonel Edward Mitchell, R.E., retired, for transmittance to the Queen, humbly praying to be paid certain money alleged to be due to him from the Treasury since January, 1890, and supporting his requests by a Copy of a Certificate, dated 1st June, 1894, from Mr. A. R. Jelf, Q,C., setting forth the facts of the case; will he explain why this petition was kept about five weeks at the Home Office, and then returned to the gallant officer; and, whether he will lay this Petition and the Copy of the Certificate upon the Table of the House, and cause the same to be printed and circulated?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds): Petitions have been repeatedly sent by Colonel Edward Mitchell, R.E., to the Home Office. The case has been tried by petition of right in the Queen's Bench, and also on a motion for a *mandamus* carried to the Court of Appeal. On November 22, 1894, a petition, with several other documents, was sent by Colonel Mitchell to the Home Office, together with a letter requesting that the Petition might not be sent to the War Office. On November 30 a reply was sent to Colonel Mitchell that the Secretary of State could not help him, the matter being one for the War Office, and the Petition was returned to him. He has called several times at the Home Office, and been informed that the matter of recommending his Petition is for the Secretary of State for War, without whose concurrence the Home Secretary cannot undertake to recommend it to Her Majesty. There is no ground for laying the Petition or the Certificate on the Table of the House.

MR. HAYDEN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, by the Royal Warrants of 1881 and 1884, a selected number of Majors and Lieutenant-Colonels of the scientific corps of the Army, the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers were compulsorily placed on half-pay at the expiration of five years' service in the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel; whether they were promised in those Warrants compensation for any loss sustained by the operation of later Warrants than that of 1872; whether the principle was applied to all the officers except Colonel Mitchell, Royal Engineers; whether all the officers received full compensation on actuarial valuation, prepared by a War Office official, except Colonel Mitchell; and, why that officer was singled out to receive only part compensation?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not think the hon. Member can be aware through how many hands the case of Colonel Mitchell has passed. It has been decided and redecided, and has formed the subject of judicial proceedings, and I am not disposed to re-open it. I may add, however, that it is an entire mistake to suppose that Colonel Mitchell's case has been dealt with in an exceptional way.

BRITISH SUBJECTS IN THE BOER REPUBLIC.

MR. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to a statement made in the *Johannesburg Times* of the 1st February, to the effect that a Boer field-cornet of the name of Bodinstein had cleared out the representatives of the firm of Messrs. E. Harvey from the town of Krugersdorp on the ground that they were Asiatics; whether they were, in fact, natives of India and British subjects; whether the law of the Boer Republic permits the expulsion of peaceable traders on no other ground save that of their nationality; and, whether he will make full inquiry into the circumstances of this case?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): If my hon. Friend will forward me the statement to which he refers, and the facts appear to justify inquiry, inquiry shall be made into the matter.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. J. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will again inquire into the destitute condition of the people in some of the electoral divisions of the Castletown Berehaven Union, especially those who reside on the seaboard between Glengariffe, who derive no benefit from the fishing industry, but who depend solely on the produce of their small holdings for subsistence?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board's Inspector will again visit this district in the course of a day or two, and report further on the condition of the people.

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a Resolution passed by the Ennis Board of Guardians regarding the distress in the vicinity of Ennis; and whether it is intended by the Government to carry out the suggestion of the Guardians by the opening of some relief works?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have received a copy of the Resolution referred to. Inquiries have been made on various occasions into the condition of the people in the Ennis Union, and, also into the statements contained in the Resolution; but the Local Government Board, upon the information before them, are unable to report that it is at present necessary to open relief works in the district. It is observed that the Resolution of the Guardians refers chiefly to the distress amongst labourers, and these, I understand, are now likely to find employment, as the spring work has commenced.

MR. J. FINUCANE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will cause inquiries to be made into the condition of the labourers in the district of Skule, Croom Union, County Limerick, where hundreds of families are collected together in less than a square mile of cutaway bog, and are suffering great destitution; and whether it would be possible to provide some employment as a relief work by completing a road through this bog, a portion of which has been approved of at the road session held at Ballyneety?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board inform me that they are not aware of the existence of unusual destitution in this locality, or of the prevalence of distress which cannot be met out of the resources of the ordinary Poor Law. The Croom Union is very well circumstanced, with moderate rates, and a very high valuation per head of the population, and the numbers on outdoor relief is now less than at the corresponding period last year.

MR. J. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that at the relief works which have been started in the Benbrack Division, in the Bawnboy Union, a number of labourers from the adjoining division of Cloverhill, in South Leitrim, were refused work because they lived about a quarter of a mile within the boundary of the county of Leitrim; and whether he will give directions to have relief works opened in the electoral divisions of Bawnboy Union, which are situated in South Leitrim, so as to afford employment to the people, who are in a state of acute distress, and willing to work at the low rate of wages paid at the relief works?

MR. J. MORLEY: I understand that the persons referred to were not refused work because they lived in another county, but because the necessity for their employment was not considered to have arisen. It is, however, intended to employ a number of these people very shortly upon the works in question.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Termon, in Donegal, where he proposes to give employment to the Glenvar fishermen, is 12 miles distant from Glenvar; whether the men are expected to travel that distance daily, or are to be allowed anything for lodging over and above the small weekly pay; whether he can find employment for them nearer their own homes; and whether he is aware that the fishermen have asked for the erection of a boat-slip in Bunnington Bay, Glenvar, and for the construction of a breakwater at Newbridge, the latter project having the approval of the Congested Districts Board, which Board is, however, unable to undertake the work from want of funds?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I now learn that the relief work at Termon is not conveniently situated for the employment of the Glenvar fishermen, and accordingly a work will be opened for these people nearer their homes. I cannot undertake to say that either of the particular works referred to by my hon. Friend will be selected, but they have been brought under the notice of the engineer in charge.

Mr. J. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has received a report from the Local Government Board for Ireland as to the distress in some of the electoral divisions of the Bantry Union; and, if so, what steps he proposes to take to alleviate it?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board's Inspector has recently visited the Bantry Union, and made careful inquiries as to the condition of the people. He reports that he has not discovered the existence of any widespread destitution in the locality, nor has any representation been made to him that abnormal distress prevails; with the milder weather and the improvement in the fishing, the Board have come to the opinion the people in the congested parts of this Union will be able to tide over their present difficulties, but the Inspector will visit the district again very shortly, and will report at once if exceptional measures are required to supplement the resources of the Poor Law.

Mr. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has received a report as to distress existing in some portions of the Schull Unions; and, whether he will take immediate steps to find work for the people who are destitute.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board's Inspector has frequently visited this Union, and, so recently as the 8th instant, visited the district of Goleen. The Inspector states that the general harvest was a good one, and that the Guardians have not thought it necessary to apply for a seed potato loan, which is, of course, an indication. The Inspector will exercise a careful supervision over this Union, but at present its circumstances are not such as to necessitate the laying out of relief works.

COLLECTION OF CESS IN COUNTY GALWAY.

Mr. P. J. FOLEY (Galway, Connemara): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Government have taken any action in reference to the admitted illegalities of cess collector Mongan, of the barony of Ballinahinch, County Galway, who on recent occasions charged more than 1s. in the £ for expense of distraining for county cess?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Irish Government are in communication with the Grand Jury in the matter referred to.

CHURCH OF ALL HALLOWS.

Mr. D. THOMAS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he can state what steps had been taken by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to remove the human remains interred in the Church of All Hallows the Great, Upper Thames Street, before the sale of the site to the New City of London Brewery Company, for the purpose of extending their brewery; and, whether there is any precedent for the sale of consecrated ground by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to a brewery company?

The UNDER SECRETARY for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. George Russell, North Beds): The sale of All Hallows the Great Church, Upper Thames Street, was authorised by Order in Council under the Union of Benefices Act. Proper arrangements were made, with my sanction, for the removal of the human remains. If the relatives wished to make the removal, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were to contribute to the cost; in other cases they were to arrange for their removal, under the superintendence of the Medical Officer of Health for the City, to Ilford Cemetery, or to Woking. I have no reason to doubt that these arrangements were duly carried out. There have been 14 cases of similar sales under the same Act. The sale is by auction, and I cannot say to what purpose the sites were afterwards devoted.

IRISH NATIONAL TEACHERS' FUND.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, what was the net capital of the Irish National Teachers' Fund on the 31st December, 1894?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The Fund will be re-valued as from the 31st December, 1895. Until that has been done, it is not possible to state the net capital.

INSPECTORS OF DRAWING.

MR. H. Y. B. LOPES (Grantham): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, what is the number of the inspectors of drawing employed by the Science and Art Department, and the amount of the salaries paid to them?

MR. ACLAND: If I am right in assuming that, by "inspectors of drawing" the hon. Member refers to inspectors of drawing in elementary schools, I have to state that all the staff of permanent inspectors are employed for some portion of their time in these inspections. That permanent staff consists at present of four senior inspectors, with salaries of £600, rising to £800 a year; 13 inspectors, with salaries of £400, rising to £600; nine sub-inspectors of the first-class, with £300, rising to £500; and 17 of the second-class, with £150 to £300 a year. Besides these, there still remain 40 of the old temporary staff of local inspectors, with about the same number of assistants, who are paid by a fee for each school they inspect—£1 for a school with any number of children up to 200; and 5s. for each additional 100 children.

THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland: (1) whether the Congested Districts Board has recently launched a new steam yacht at a cost of £10,000 for cruising about the west coast of Ireland; (2) what was the sum allowed by the Treasury for a steam cruiser for the west coast of Scotland,

and what is the value of the fish caught on these coasts respectively; (3) has he observed the statement in the Board's Reports that the cost of administration of their income of £45,000 a year amounts to close on £9,000 a year; and would he state what is the amount given by the Treasury for defraying the salaries of secretary, assistant secretary, and staff of clerks, and how many of the latter are there; (4) will he furnish a Return of the items of administration as passed by the Auditor General, and especially of the sum of £1,367 5s. 5d. for an expenditure of £1,589 10s. in connection with the Irish Reproductive Loan Fund, and of £768 13s. 4d. for an expenditure of £957 10s. 4d. for piers, roads, bridges, &c.; (5) Is it intended to allow the expenditure of £9,000 a year of the Board's income being spent on a stud farm in county Wicklow; (6) is it the case that the Board has given £600 for the improvement of the town of Donegal, which is not in a congested area; (7) will he state the terms of the contracts which have been entered into for the approaches and ironwork of the viaduct over the Gweebara Estuary in County Donegal; (8) are cheques signed by members of the Board; (9) and how are powers of surcharge exercised by the Auditor General?

MR. J. MORLEY: (1) The reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. The steamer will be employed on the west coast of Ireland in carrying fish, salt, and other requisites, and will also be made available for marketing fish cured by fishermen at the Board's stations—the remoteness of many of these stations being at present one of the chief obstacles to the development of the fisheries in congested districts on the west coast. (2) I have no information as to the matter referred to in the second paragraph. (3 & 4) The sum voted for defraying the salaries in the current financial year of the secretary, assistant secretary, and 17 clerks amounts to £3,321, details of which will be found in the Estimates. During the year ended 31st March 1894, further sums amounting to £6,955 were paid in respect of local inquiries, inspections, surveys, and engineering expenses, and full information as to the expenditure of this amount will be found in the third Report of the Board presented to

Parliament in August last. As regards the items of £1,367 5s. 5d. and £768 13s. 4d., to which special reference is made, these include the salaries, fees, and travelling expenses of engineers and their assistants in preparing preliminary reports and surveys of a large number of works, on the respective merits of which, without such reports, it was impossible for the Board to form an opinion. These preliminary expenses must necessarily in the early stages of the Board's operations bear a large proportion of the actual outlay on works. (5) The sum expended in the year 1893-4 on the stud farm was £2,473, which includes £1,695, the cost of buildings. The expenditure of £6,349 on horses includes their purchase, transport to congested districts, forage, and grooms' wages. Of this amount the sum of £514 was returned to the Board in the shape of fees. (6) The Board have agreed to contribute annually, for three years, a sum of £200 towards the cost of a bridge and approach road from the railway to Donegal, and before making the grant the Board satisfied themselves that the people in adjoining congested districts would be greatly benefited by these works. (7) A contract for the sum of £4,450 has been entered into with an English firm for the ironwork of the viaduct, and further contracts for £1,750 have been entered into with local contractors in connection with the same undertaking. (8 & 9) The Board's payments are not made by cheque, but by the usual payable order system as arranged by the Treasury. The powers of the Auditor General with regard to the Board's accounts are exercised in the usual manner under the provisions contained in the various Acts of Parliament dealing with the subject. I understand that the Congested District Board have now under their consideration, and will discuss the general question, of the cost of their administration.

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Congested Districts Board has made a grant to Captain Eccles, Moneygold, County Sligo, to start a small weaving industry; how much money, if any, has already been paid by the Board on account of this industry; how many hands are employed, and has the Board received any return on the expenditure; can he state the amount expended by the Board on inspections in North Sligo; is he aware that no public notice was given of the Board's proceedings in North Sligo; and will he see that, in future, when the Board proceeds in any district to discharge its functions, the public will be duly notified of the fact?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Congested Districts Board made a grant of £10 to Mrs. Eccles for providing and maintaining a class room for one year, in which embroidery and other cottage industries might be taught, and a further grant of £50 was sanctioned for the purchase of spinning wheels to be lent to this lady for the development of the weaving industry in the district. The total amount paid for this industry up to the present is £23 6s. 2d. About 30 persons receive instruction, and I may state that, quite apart from the Board's testimony as to the results, I have received from Mr. Rolleston, the Managing Director of the Irish Industries Association, a letter speaking in the highest terms of the capacity and energy which Mrs. Eccles has shown in promoting the weaving industry and other industrial work in this district, and of the good results which have followed from the instruction afforded by this lady. The amount expended on inspections in North Sligo cannot be stated, as the expenses under this head are not allocated according to districts. Full information as to the Board's proceedings are contained in their published Annual Reports, and, in reply to the last paragraph, the Board, in discharge of its functions in any district, give public notice as the circumstances may require.

NAVAL AGE PENSION.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that a Circular was issued in 1865, signed Clarence Paget, to the effect that if a man has been a pensioner for five years at the age of 55, he shall receive an age pension of 5d. per diem; and also that recruiting bills after 1865 stated that a man should receive 5d. per diem in addition after reaching 55; and whether he will reconsider his decision, and grant an additional pension to these men on attaining the age of 55?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): The Circular (signed Clarence Paget) alluded to was addressed and applied only to men who, at that time, were inmates of Greenwich Hospital, and the promises therein contained were strictly carried out. The recruiting bill mentioned, said:—"£76,000 a year is employed to grant eligible pensioners additional pensions of 5d. and 9d. a day on reaching the age of 55 and upwards." This has been more than fulfilled, for, as I pointed out to the hon. Member on the 7th instant, a sum of £100,000 is now devoted to the purpose. I am unable to hold out any prospect of diverting any of the sums, now applied for other purposes of the original foundation of Greenwich Hospital, to farther supplementing the very liberal share now allotted to age pensions.

NEWSPAPERS FOR PRISONERS.

MR. T. B. CURRAN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Deartment, in reference to the supply of newspapers to prisoners awaiting trial, whether he is aware that a copy of *Reynolds's Newspaper* sent to a man named Michael Barry, awaiting trial in Her Majesty's Prison, Winchester, was sent back to his father at Aldershot, marked "not allowed;" whether the Home Office pointed out to the Governor his mistake in limiting the number of newspapers supplied to Barry to one per week; and whether steps will be taken to prevent in the future any such censorship of the Press in Her Majesty's prisons?

MR. ASQUITH: I am informed by the Governor of the prison that *Reynolds's Newspaper* has never been allowed to be received in Winchester Prison by prisoners awaiting trial. Michael Barry was so informed soon after his admission and directed to inform his friends to that effect. The Governor was informed by the Prison Commissioners that there is no reason why *Reynolds's Newspaper* should not be received by trial prisoners, and no order to limit the number of newspapers to one a week. The supply of books and newspapers to prisoners awaiting trial is a matter left to the discretion of the Visiting Committee of the prison, and the Secretary of State would be unwilling to interfere in any way with the discretion of the local authorities in this matter.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING CONTRACTS.

MR. J. H. DALZIEL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury how soon he hopes to move the appointment of the Select Committee promised last Session on the subject of Government printing contracts; and whether he will consent to include within the reference to the Committee all contracts other than printing under the control of Her Majesty's Stationery Office?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I hope to be in a position to move the appointment of a Select Committee after the Easter holidays. Excepting the contract for Parliamentary reporting, which has lately been the subject of inquiry by a Select Committee, and that for the supply of envelopes, there are practically no running contracts under the Comptroller of the Stationery Office other than those dealing with printing and binding, and I am prepared to enlarge the reference so as to include both these latter subjects.

CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT.

MR. R. A. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the great benefits which have accrued to the poorer agricultural classes of the community from the operations on the Continent of the Raiffeisen system of co-operative credit, as set forth in the Reports furnished to the Royal Commission on Labour upon Germany and Italy, and of the further fact that the Austrian Provincial Governments have assisted in the development of the said system in Austria, he will appoint a Commission to visit those countries and take evidence on the subject?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I think we shall be able, through our representatives abroad, to get intelligence upon this subject more rapidly than by sending a Commission abroad. We get very satisfactory information from our representatives abroad.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will arrange that an opportunity shall be afforded to the House, in considering the Vote on Account, to discuss the policy of the Education Department towards voluntary schools?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I cannot make any conditions with respect to any particular subject in the discussion of the Vote on Account.

Mr. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): When is the Vote on Account likely to be taken?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Shortly before the close of the financial year.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER: Will it be taken at a proper time, so as to allow of discussion?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The question is: What is "a proper time"?

CONTRIBUTIONS TO LOCAL TAXATION.

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Committee will be appointed in connection with the distribution part of the Probate Duty and of the proceeds of Licences made under the Local Government Act of 1888; and, whether this Committee will deal with the whole question, or only with that portion of it which affected the sum paid to the Metropolis, as compared with the rest of the country?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I must ask my hon. Friend to postpone this question for a little time, because I should like to consult on the subject with the Secretary of State for India, who is, unfortunately, absent from ill-health.

BRITISH HONDURAS.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if order has now been completely restored in British Honduras; and if steps will be taken to prevent any recurrence of the recent outbreak, and the consequent interruption of trade?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Certain labour riots occurred about Christmas-time in British Honduras, and it is not anticipated that there will be any recurrence of the disorder.

COOKERY INSTRUCTION.

Sir W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is contemplating any action on the lines indicated by the Deputation on Training Schools of Cookery, lately received by the Secretary of the Education Department; and whether he will be able to secure, in the future, that all persons receiving cookery diplomas shall be examined by persons appointed by the Department, and that no grant of public money on account of instruction in cookery shall be paid to any public elementary school working on a syllabus not framed by the Education Department?

Mr. ACLAND: I am giving the matter my careful consideration, and I will make inquiry in order to ascertain whether, and on what basis, an examination of Cookery Teachers can be held by this Department, as desired by the Deputation. This inquiry may, no doubt, occupy some little time. It is already provided in the Code that a list of dishes taught during the school-year, and the record of the instruction given, must be submitted to the Inspector. But I will consider whether a syllabus can be framed by the Department of an extended character, from which school managers may be able to make a selection.

ARMENIA.

Mr. C. E. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has been informed that Bahri Pasha, Governor of Van, in Armenia, is intimidating witnesses who wish to appear before the Commission; and if he will make inquiries, and should those inquiries confirm the above statement, will Her Majesty's Government insist on the immediate suspension from his post of Bahri Pasha?

*Sir EDWARD GREY: Her Majesty's Government have received a report that the Governor of Van is unfavourably disposed towards the Armenians and Christian population of his district, and Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople will be instructed to make a representation on the subject. They had not heard of any proceeding on his part of the nature described, and if he had so acted it is scarcely probable that the fact would not have been reported by Her Majesty's Vice Consul, but they will make inquiry.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of the Foreign Office has been called to a Reuter's despatch from Constantinople stating that, according to authentic information, the number of clerical and lay Armenians who have been thrown into prison in the various provinces for political reasons is estimated at between 2,500 and 3,000, and enumerating the principal prelates and others who are in prison or exile; and, whether, in view of the large numbers who are undergoing punishment without trial or after mock trials, Her Majesty's Government will make serious representations on the subject to the Porte?

*SIR EDWARD GREY: The matter is receiving the close attention of Her Majesty's Government, and, in consequence of information which has been received from British Consular officers, a representation will be made to the Porte.

SCHOOL INSPECTION.

MR. H. S. FOSTER: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, with regard to the fact that the senior Chief Inspector has now visited the Christ Church Infant School, Lowestoft, and has reported that it is sufficiently lighted, that the marching space is sufficient, that the staffing of the school is within the limits prescribed by the Code, and that the average attendance is within the accommodation recognised by the Department, and has also recommended that the School Managers were entitled to the portion of the grant withheld (£24 10s.), whether the Department has paid the Managers the sum of £24 10s. so withheld, and, if not, for what reason it is still withheld; if he can state who is responsible at the Education Department for the refusal in the first instance to send down the Chief Inspector in response to the appeal of the Managers; whether he has taken or intends to take any action with regard to Her Majesty's Inspector; and, whether he has taken, or proposes to take, any steps at the Department to prevent a repetition of such circumstances in the case of any voluntary school appealing to the Department against the report of the Inspector?

MR. ACLAND: The additional grant in question was paid more than a month ago. The appeal referred to (which was not for the visit of the Chief Inspector, but for an unbiassed inspector) was dealt with, like all such requests, on the responsibility of the Department. I do not intend to take any action with regard to Her Majesty's Inspector, whose conscientious discharge of his duties has been much appreciated by many managers in his district. I do not propose to take any further steps.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS IN NORTHUMBERLAND.

MR. H. S. FOSTER: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he has now seen the Report of the special committee appointed by the Newcastle Diocesan Society to assist voluntary schools in the county of Northumberland in resisting pressure from the Department, and particularly to the statement therein that the committee had recovered during the year 1894 the sum of £900 from the Department in respect of arrears in the county of Northumberland, which it is stated had been retained by the Department, and the further statement in the said report that in five school districts in Northumberland the establishment of school boards was imminent, but had been avoided through the action of the committee, and whether he is able to explain the circumstances alluded to so far as the Department is concerned; and whether, in view of the fact that the committee have been able to render the Department valuable assistance in enabling them to understand the local circumstances affecting the voluntary schools in their district, he will invite the formation of similar committees in other parts of the country?

MR. ACLAND: The report in question is the one which I informed the hon. Member that I had seen when I replied to his question on the 28th February. The circumstances alluded to so far as the Department is concerned may perhaps be best explained in the words of the member of the committee who wrote the article prefixed to this report—

"What was lacking in each case was a little common sense to help officialism at headquarters to grasp the practical situation. My Lords are quite willing—at least this is our unvarying experience—to treat most courteously with managers who will state their case with patience and clearness. In no one instance have we been met by other than fairness."

The formation of similar committees in other parts of the country is obviously a matter for local initiative, not for that of the Department.

ALDERSHOT CAMP.

Baron FERDINAND de ROTHSCHILD (Bucks, Aylesbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the War Office has withheld its sanction to the construction of a tramway from Farnborough Station through Aldershot Camp; and, if so, whether he has any objection to state the ground on which such sanction has been withheld?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: A tramway already exists from Farnborough Station, but its continuation through the central avenue of the camp is a proposal on the expediency of which difference of opinion exists.

SIERRA LEONE DELIMITATION.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state when further correspondence can be laid upon the Table of the House explaining and containing the arrangement come to for the delimitation of the boundary between the Colony of Sierra Leone and the neighbouring French possessions?

***Sir EDWARD GREY**: I understand that the agreement has been distributed.

THE TRAINING SHIP "BRITANNIA."

Sir H. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can give a reassuring account of the sanitary condition of the *Britannia* training ship, where a serious epidemic has recently broken out and several lives have been lost?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: The sanitary condition of the *Britannia* is at present considered excellent. Frequent inspections of the ship and cadets have been made, and every precaution adopted to insure as perfect a hygienic condition as possible. The origin of the late epidemic is distinctly traceable to a cadet who had been exposed to infection previous to joining the *Britannia*. Three deaths occurred, one in the person of a colonial cadet from Jamaica, who was undoubtedly affected by the late severe weather; another had been the subject of heart disease, and the third succumbed to severe acute bronchitis. The epidemic may now be regarded as practically at an end.

Sir H. HOWORTH asked, if it was not the case that the sanatorium arrangements connected with the *Britannia* were too limited in extent in every way, and that a portion of the difficulty had arisen in consequence of patients having to be removed to a gymnasium where there was no proper accommodation for them.

Mr. ROBERTSON could not answer from personal knowledge; he would consult the medical authorities.

UGANDA.

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL desired to ask a question of which he had given private notice. It was whether the attention of the Foreign Office had been directed to the very serious allegation of cruelty made in a telegram from Uganda published in Saturday's papers; whether it was the case that the leaders of the native tribes had protested; and what action the Foreign Office proposed to take?

***Sir E. GREY** said, he had seen the statement since he received notice of the hon. Member's question. The Government had not previously to that heard of anything of the kind having happened, nor had they had any confirmation of the statement in any way.

Mr. DALZIEL asked if any inquiry would be made?

***Sir E. GREY** said, they could not inquire without knowing the authority on which the statement was founded, but if information was given them which showed it was probable or even conceivable that anything of the kind had occurred, inquiry would be made.

Mr. DALZIEL inquired whether the hon. Gentleman could tell the House what was the position of our representative against whom the charge was made?

***Sir E. GREY** understood from the statement he saw that the charge was made against a British official. Colonel Colvile, who was in charge at the time, would soon be home, and inquiry would be made of him if information was forthcoming.

ESTABLISHED CHURCH (WALES) BILL.

In reply to G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N),

SIR W. HARCOURT hoped the Second Reading of this Bill would be taken on Thursday next.

OUTDOOR RELIEF IN IRELAND.

MR. J. MORLEY asked the leave of the House to introduce a Bill to make temporary provision for distress in Ireland, and said a sentence or two would suffice to indicate the purport of the measure. It was a Bill to authorise the Local Government Board, under their sealed orders, to empower Boards of Guardians to give outdoor relief until the month of September of this year to persons who otherwise were disqualified from receiving outdoor relief, and generally to remove the restrictions upon the distribution of fuel and food in Ireland. The Bill contained a clause indemnifying any Board of Guardians who, since the distress began, had relaxed their restrictions, and it also contained a clause which had appeared in all Bills of the kind providing that there should be no electoral disability upon any person who received relief under the provisions of the measure. He hoped the House would give him leave to bring in the Bill.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, S.) was sorry the Bill was brought in without their being able to say a word about it, because it took for granted, in the case of Ireland, an alteration in the law which a Committee upstairs were carefully considering in regard to England, that was, the doing away with disfranchisement for receiving parish relief. There was a considerable amount of distress in England at the present time, and he would not presume to say what ought to be done in respect of it. But the House would be placed in a very peculiar position if it took for granted that that should be done for Ireland which a Committee were carefully considering should be done for England. The Seed Potato Bill was allowed to go through, but this Bill made a very grave alteration in the law, one which the House ought to have some opportunity of considering in reference to the whole of the United Kingdom. He therefore hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not press his Motion.

MR. J. MORLEY reminded the hon. Gentleman that the provision to which he had drawn particular attention had been contained in all Bills of this kind. Besides, the Bill would only have effect till the end of August of the present year, therefore it could not have any very serious operation. The hon. Member would have an opportunity of discussing the Bill on the Second Reading.

MR. BARTLEY: I may say in explanation——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I have no alternative but to put the question.

The House divided:—Ayes, 158; Noes, 38.—(Division List, No. 27.)

Bill presented and read 1°.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—NAVY ESTIMATES, 1895-6.

The House went into Committee of Supply on the Navy Estimates.

Mr. MELLOR in the Chair.

(In the Committee.)

On the Vote for £4,133,500 for wages of officers, seamen and boys, for the Navy, Coastguard and Royal Marines, for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1896,

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, he thought the Government would recognise that there was no disposition on the Opposition side of the House to unduly prolong the discussion on these Votes. The House had been edified by the usual duel between the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. J. Reed) and the hon. Member for North Belfast (Sir E. J. Harland), by the usual afflicting litanies of members representing dockyard constituencies, which made him think the time had arrived when dockyard labourers ought to be deprived of their votes—and, indeed, all public servants—because they only used them for the purpose of raising discussion in the House to get additions to their wages and salaries. He had no desire to embarrass the Government, or, indeed, to do anything else but to assist them by a few suggestions. He was animated by the feeling that it was the business of the House to assist whatever Government was in power to improve that great service—the Navy—on which we so much relied. He acknowledged the great services of the First Lord of the Admiralty, and recognised in him a worthy successor of that other Lord Spencer who, in the time of England's stress and difficulty and danger, so admirably filled the post of the head of the Navy. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty had introduced the Estimates with a speech of such frankness and directness, that he was in danger of becoming the spoiled child of the House, and of rivalling in popularity outside the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or even the Prime Minister himself. Turning to the subject of the Vote, he saw the Government was going to spend something like a million of money on removing seamen from hulks and putting them into barracks on shore. This policy was the invention not of the present Government, but of the last Government; but he thought it was entirely wrong. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty had said that the change was made for sanitary and social reasons, and for reasons affecting the comfort of the men. He denied every one of the reasons. He contended that a hulk was very much better for sanitary reasons than the most modern contrivance in the way of drainage on shore. He did not understand what was meant by social reasons. What they should aim at in lodging seamen was to see that they did not cease to be sailors. When a man was put in a hulk he had to learn how to get into and out of a boat, to live in a restricted and confined space, to get used to sleeping in a hammock in 18 inches of space, to knocking his head against unusually low projections, and to walking about without stumbling over ring-bolts. In fact, he got ingrained into him the habits of a sailor. But in a barracks on land he had any amount of space to move about in; he slept in a bed, never got into a boat, and became more of a soldier than a sailor. The new idea—not of the seamen, but of the gunnery officers—was to treat sailors as if they were soldiers; to put the men into barracks where they learned marching and battalion drill, instead of into good, wholesome ships, where they could learn the customs of the sea. It was most important that the men should be able to steer a correct course. But that they were often not able to do. It was most important that they should be able to take a cast of the lead and call the cast. But that they were often not able to do. To his own knowledge many of the sailors were unable to pull a boat, or row a boat, or sail a boat, or tow a boat, or beach a boat. This policy of taking the men from the hulks and putting them into barracks on shore deprived the men of opportunities of learning things which as sailors they ought to know, and which increased their opportunities of becoming seamen. That, in his view, was a mistaken policy. The Admiralty were, in fact, running paper against practice. They were giving up the old English maxim, that practice meant perfect, and they were conveying by their conduct that paper made perfect. They seemed to believe that they could turn out seamen by getting the men to sit on forms and listen to things and write things. He said that on the contrary the only way to make sailors was by standing on the deck and acting. He did not deprecate science, but experimental science, and not theoretic science, was what he demanded. What he wanted was the science which enabled men to handle a boat, to steer, and heave the lead, and to do all the other things required of sailors. But all this practice on board ship was to be set aside for theory on shore and on paper. This policy was advocated by men who had arrived at eminence by paper work. To his mind it was a mischievous and dangerous policy; and he hoped the Admiralty would go back to the old system, whereby men were judged not by what they did on paper, but what they accomplished when they got a job to tackle on board ship. Lord St. Vincent in 1796 wrote—

> "I will not lie here a moment longer than is necessary to put us to rights, because you will know that inaction in the Tagus will make us all cowards."

Lord St. Vincent would not have believed that not only did they propose to keep their ships largely in port, but when they had got into port to take the seamen out of them and put them on shore. That was a dangerous and a very wrong thing, and the matter ought to be reconsidered. As to promotion, if they were going to have a larger number of officers entering the Service it would be necessary to revise the list of admirals, captains, and so forth. He trusted that some attention would be given to the leave grievance, so that officers who came home after serving abroad for three years, and who were entitled to six weeks' leave, being a fortnight for each year of foreign service, should not be immediately ordered away again, and thus prevented taking advantage of the holiday due to them, and see the suppressed leave, instead of being carried to their credit, clean wiped off from the slate. This was a grievance the naval officers felt very much, and he hoped steps would be taken to remedy it. Military officers were almost always on leave, but the working sailor officer could not actually get even the little leave which was due to him. He now came to a point about the men. He had never understood that there was any difficulty in getting boys for the Navy, but, on the contrary, he believed that they could always get more than they wanted for the training ships. He knew that, in his own town of King's Lynn, eligible boys had presented themselves in the ordinary way, and the medical officers had had to invent reasons for rejecting them, because they had more boys than they wanted. He believed that there would be no difficulty in getting boys in the ordinary way. If that was so, what reason was there for providing this wandering ship the *Northampton* to get boys? Again, he saw that the boys who joined the *Northampton* were only to have six months' training, but in an ordinary training ship they had fifteen months. He failed to see why, if the longer period was necessary in the one case, it should not be equally necessary in the other. He understood another training ship was to be set up, and undoubtedly the present number was insufficient. This ship, he believed, was to be stationed at Queenstown or Cork. He would point out that this was an entirely new departure. Ever since the mutiny at the Nore it had been the practice not to have a training ship in Ireland and not to take Irish boys, but now they were going to have a training ship in Ireland, which would be supplied entirely by Irish boys. And they were going to put this vessel in the wrong place. They were going to put her near a large town. That was a mistake. A training ship should be at some port which was distant from a large town, and where the boys would not be assailed by the temptations incident to such a town. Falmouth, for example, was an excellent place for a training ship. He did not know whether anything was being done to improve the rating of the signalmen. Their signalmen were insufficient and not good. The signals were the ears and tongue of the Fleet. If the signalmen were not sufficient to, or capable of, making signals or taking them in, the fleet could neither speak nor hear. The Fleet, in such circumstances, might be incapable of being communicated with or of communicating with their commanding officer. He hoped they should hear that something would be done to improve the rating of signalmen and to induce better men to join, and also that their numbers would be increased. In regard to the men, there was another matter to which he wished to allude. He understood that a considerable amount of the increase in the stokers must be held to be due to the larger consumption of coal, and, consequently, the larger number of men to trim the coal and stoke it, required for the Belleville boilers. He thought the Admiralty were making a great and serious experiment with boilers which required more men, and with boilers that had failed entirely in the Mercantile Marine. There was not a single representative of these boilers in the Mercantile Navy at the present day, and whenever they had been tried they had always failed. The Engineer-in-Chief was responsible for introducing these boilers, but the responsibility was shared by the First Lord of the Admiralty, because he had a preponderating voice. If they succeeded, well and good, but if they did not there would be a serious day of reckoning in that House and in the country. The Admiralty were entering upon this large experiment of using boilers without a thorough trial of them having taken

taken place. Turning to the question of works, he said the Admiralty were going to make works, not only here but all over the world, to teach their men that they were not to be vigilant sailors, but that they were to turn in, go to sleep and feel comfortable when the enemy was a few miles from their shore. He said that was a mistake. It was not the method pursued in the blockade at Toulon, where for two whole years the men were kept constantly on the alert and rowing guard night and day. If they were going to box up their men in Dover, Portland, and Gibraltar, in inaccessible breakwaters where they were to be perfectly safe from attack, they would teach them that they had a right to turn in and sleep and take no care for the enemy. That was wrong. It would be teaching them not to be alert, whereas, all their efforts should be to teach them to be unceasingly vigilant. The hon. Member was proceeding to discuss the financial methods by which the Naval programme was to be carried out, when—

THE CHAIRMAN interposed and pointed out that such a question did not arise on this Vote. When the Annual Loan Bill came on the hon. Member would be able to discuss the financial aspect.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES had hoped to have said a few words on the general strategy of the naval operations, because, really and truly, upon their view of Naval stategy depended every farthing they voted, whether for works, or men, or anything else. But he recognised that this was not the time for raising such a question, and he trusted another occasion would be afforded him on which he might present a few considerations to the Government. There was only one other matter to which he desired to allude. Members would have seen from the reports of speeches in the French Chamber, that the increase in men and in English Naval expenditure had aroused the susceptibilities of France. He thought there was no ground for those susceptibilities. Some members of the French Chamber seemed to think their Naval Votes were directed against France. But they should have to take the same Votes and maintain the same strength in their Navy if France did not exist. There was not a man who merited the name of a statesman who did not feel the importance of our maintaining good terms with France and of France maintaining good terms England. It was not against France, but for the carrying out of the destinies which were given to them in this world, and in the maintenance of their trade they sought to make their Navy strong. He and Members sitting on that side were convinced that the Government had not only acted wisely, but had done their bounden duty in coming and asking the House for what it would never refuse—namely, adequate sums for the maintenance of a strong and powerful Navy.

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee), replying upon the various points raised during the discussion of the Vote, said, the interval that had elapsed since the Estimates came before the Committee had enabled him to review the comments of hon. Members. These comments had been grouped round three subjects, and the first was that of works. Upon this he had only to say that in a few days the Loan Bill—to provide the first instalment for works—would be before the House, and that would be a more suitable time for the discussion of questions relating to the items. With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Kings Lynn he knew the hon. Member's knowledge of Naval matters, and he would bear in mind what he had said when he came to further vindicate the barrack policy of Government. Subjects had also been raised relating to the Shipbuilding Vote. In that he included all questions as to the types of new ships, the great battle of the boilers (in which he contended so unequally with the hon. Member for Gateshead), and other dockyard questions, and hon. Members would permit him to postpone what he had to say upon these matters until the Shipbuilding Vote was before the Committee. But, in answer to the hon. and Learned Member for Plymouth, he would like to say that the apprehension he expressed about petitions had no foundation in fact. He, himself, did not think the men would be prejudiced by the delay in bringing forward the petitions. But some weeks ago the Admiralty caused an order to be disseminated that in future the petitions should be collected at the end of September or October instead of in November as now, that the Admiralty might have an opportunity of seeing them before the Estimates were framed in November. With regard to the question of the Engine-room complement in the Navy, he had already said that during last year some concessions were made to the demands put forward on behalf of the men, after hearing certain hon. Members of the House who were interested in engineering questions. He was sorry, however, to find that what he said had been misunderstood by certain service papers. This was a warning to be cautious about the language one used about the service. It had been represented that the engineering staff of the Navy had votes, and because of this the Admiralty listened to the engineer Members of the House. That was a total delusion. The Admiralty made no discrimination between the engineering and the executive part of the Navy. The hon. Members for Lewisham, Battersea and Gateshead would remember perfectly well that they approached the Admiralty, not as political representatives of the engineers of the Navy, but as engineering experts who were deeply interested in the position of Naval engineers, and, with a good sense and patriotism deserving of all admiration, desired to lay their professional views before them, rather than appear to be agitating for advantages to their profession on the floor of the House of Commons. Having already said the Admiralty would not be unwilling to receive their views on another occasion, he hoped he might be allowed to pass away from this engineering grievance. The senior Member for Devonport spoke of the stokers in the Navy. He had asked those responsible for advising the Admiralty whether there was any fault to be found with the quality of the men, and he was assured that it was entirely satisfactory.

Captain BETHELL (York, W. R., Holderness): The hon. Gentleman says certain concessions have been made to the engineers in the Navy. Has he stated what they are?

Mr. ROBERTSON: Yes, I did so in my last speech. That interruption enabled him to correct an unfortunate mistake which had got into the newspapers. The Admiralty were adding £9,000 a year to the pay and pension of engineer officers. The figures appeared in the papers as £90,000. But he was sure no engineer officer had been misled by the mistake, for which he was not responsible. He now came to questions properly raised under the present Vote, and the first was as to the claim put forward, not for the first time, for improvement in the status of the warrant officers. Everybody who spoke seemed to share the views of the hon. Member for Devonport on the subject, and an hon. and gallant Admiral went so far as to inform the House that the Naval Lords of the Admiralty were of the same opinion. He did not like to discriminate between Naval and Civil Lords, but when it was considered expedient to lay the opinions of the Naval Lords before the Committee it would be done through himself, and not through the hon. and gallant Admiral. But the position of warrant officers was an extremely difficult question which had been a long time before not only the Naval Lords, but the Board of Admiralty and the Manning Committee. The whole matter had taken a new turn, and was at that moment engaging the consideration of the Board of Admiralty. The duties, classification, and position of warrant officers in the service would come up for immediate review by itself. The necessities of the modern warship made it absolutely necessary the whole question should be considered, and until this was settled it would be obviously impossible for him to give any further information. The questions of a possible new rank and more rapid promotion must be suspended until the Admiralty had received the opinion of its professional advisers.

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether the promotion of warrant officers to quarter-deck rank would be considered.

Mr. ROBERTSON replied that he could not say at present.

Mr. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport) asked when the Admiralty would come to a decision.

Mr. ROBERTSON said, he was unable to tell.

Mr. H. E. KEARLEY (Devonport) inquired whether the hon. Gentleman did not make practically the same statement about the warrant officers two years ago.

Mr. ROBERTSON said, that what he had just stated was not in his mind at all two years ago. Turning to the difference between the allowance given to able-bodied pensioners in the fleet reserve and the dockyard reserve—the former receiving 1s. 6d. and the latter 1s. 1d.—he said he had been asked why this discrimination was made. The fact was the employment of pensioners of the fleet reserve was temporary. This system of temporary employment was coming to an end, and when the numbers of the active service list were brought up to the proper mark it would be ended altogether. The end being temporary, the employment being temporary, the whole institution being temporary, there was naturally a larger allowance made to the men so engaged than there was to the men employed in the dockyard reserve. It might be said that the dockyard men did not get enough; but he would ask the Committee to remember that the dockyard reserve pensioners do not come under anything like ordinary market conditions, but come under a preferential scheme. If he mistook not, they were employed without any serious limit in respect of age; at any rate they had exclusive right to the appointment; nobody else was allowed to come in; and that differentiated their case from that of others. A question had been raised about the allowance to marines going a second time on foreign service; and he was glad to be able to give the hon. Member for Devonport the comfort that his remonstrances had proved effectual, and that a remedy in the direction he desired had been applied. The question about Naval shipwrights he should rather like to leave for the future as one of the dockyard questions, because it came before the department on the petition of the shipwright apprentices. It had been asked why boys from the *Northampton* training ship were taken on after six months instead of 15 months' training. The *Northampton* was intended to get hold of boys who could be put into the Navy almost at once in order to avoid the anticipated deficiency of 1,800 men. It was thought that a year could be saved if they could get hold of a class of boys a year older or more, and, therefore, readier for service than ordinary boys were with the best preliminary training that could be given them. It was thought it would be a good thing to send the *Northampton* to those places on the coast that hitherto had not yielded any boys for the Navy, and, on the whole, the experiment had succeeded wonderfully; it had aroused public interest in the Navy; and almost every member for a place on the sea-board appeared to be anxious for the *Northampton* to visit his constituency. He would not pretend to say that the experiment was a complete success until the boys obtained had been more fully tested, but still there was room to hope for the best. Other points had been raised which he would take care to represent to the members of the Board of Admiralty specially concerned; and he hoped that now they might be allowed to take Vote I., as they had had an unusually long discussion.

Sir W. LAWSON (Cockermouth) rose to move the reduction of the Vote by £1,000. He said that, after the full discussion of the details of the Estimates, he hoped they might be allowed to consider, as a whole, the policy they involved. He did not speak as a pessimist or a croaker, but simply as an independent member who was horrified at the enormous expenditure for warlike purposes. He apologised to the Committee for moving his amendment now; it would have been more appropriate on the vote for the men, but he let the opportunity slip; and such was the languor and lassitude prevailing that nobody seemed to do the right thing at the right time. He took the opportunity of raising the question of the policy of these armaments because, in the view of political friends sitting below the gangway, they could not allow this enormous expenditure to pass unchallenged. The hon. Member for South Edinburgh, in an admirable speech on Friday night, said that the prosperity of this country depended upon free trade and an invincible Navy. Yes, but to be invincible, our Navy must be prepared to meet, not only any other two Navies, but all other Navies; and for that purpose the Estimates were too small; while on any other assumption they were too large for all rational purposes. He was not anxious to run any risk; but he agreed with Sir R. Peel, who, long ago, said:—

> "I believe that in time of peace we must by retrenchment consent to incur some risk."

Those were words of common sense; and it ought to be explained now whether we were preparing to fight the whole world, or were proceeding on a more rational footing. They were all too apt to put responsibility on the Government; and he felt that in this case he could not do that; indeed, responsibility rested on all members, and this was a matter on which they might well speak out. On other matters they were hampered by the fear of what would happen to their measures in another place, but in this matter they were free and responsible only to their constituents. Of course he should be told that all this armament was for defence only. Well, if it were for anything else it would be the most wicked expenditure imaginable, and he thought the tendency of these enormous armaments was to produce danger. A noble lord opposite had carried by a large majority the Second Reading of a Bill based on the assumption that if people walked about with pistols they would be very likely to use them; and if that were true of individuals it was true of nations. If we had these ships and armaments all ready for action there was a great temptation to put them into action. Of course they would hear again the old adage, "If you wish for peace you must prepare for war," but that was like saying that if you wanted to keep dry you must jump into the river, or if you wanted to keep sober you must fly to brandy. Experience showed the folly of the wise saying that was so often quoted. France and Germany, Russia and Turkey, were the four nations that had fallen most completely under militarism, and we know that within living memory all these nations had been involved in disastrous wars.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) rose to a point of order. Was not the hon. Baronet attacking the general policy of Naval Expenditure? Would other Members be allowed to enter upon the general question?

THE CHAIRMAN: The general question must not be entered upon, except so far as the Vote is concerned. As I understand the hon. Baronet is about to move a reduction of the Vote on the ground that he thinks the number of men asked for is too many.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: Then we may follow on the same lines?

THE CHAIRMAN: There can be no general discussion on the Vote except so far as the Vote itself permits.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: Except so far as the hon. Baronet has carried the discussion?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): This is not the Vote for men but for money.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cockermouth) said, he hoped the hon. Member and others would not be more out of order than himself. Surely, proper reasons should be given why this sum of money should be voted. The Committee were called upon to vote all this money to keep up armaments because it was supposed to be the best way of bringing about a settlement of international disputes. But all these disputes were settled at last by Conference, and all he said was—settle the dispute before the slaughter. Lord Dufferin said, not long since, that if he had his way, whenever war broke out between two nations, he would take the Ambassadors of each and have them hanged in public. Without going so far as that, he would be inclined to proceed somewhat in that way towards Governments who chose war as the means of settlement. There were only two ways of settling disputes—you could settle them by reasoning, or by fighting; and he opposed this Vote because the Government, through making these strenuous efforts to provide great armaments for the settlement of disputes by fighting, had not, so far as he knew, taken any means for settlement by reason. He had been taught from his earliest youth that the policy of the Liberal Party was comprised in the watchwords—"Peace, Retrenchment, Reform;" and the present Government was the nearest approach to a Liberal Government he had seen in his generation, and the nearest approach probably he was likely to see. They could do nothing more likely to make their name honourable and memorable than by taking a course to get rid of the abominable method of settling disputes by war. But this Liberal Government was out-Jingoing the "Jingoes," and never were there more extravagant Navy Estimates. These "bloated armaments," as long since they had been called, were growing year by year, and the words used by his hon. Friend (Mr. Robertson) every elector should read—

> "Ten years ago the Navy Estimates were just over £12,000,000; to-day they are £18,000,000. Ten years ago ——"

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Baronet is now going beyond this particular Vote, and touching upon matters germane to a general discussion.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON said, there were wide limits for discussion in this Vote of £4,000,000, and it was an awful statement that this expenditure on machinery for slaughter had in ten years progressed by leaps and bounds. If this was to go on, what use was there in talking about education and civilisation, what was the use of the Liberal Government, what was the use of Christianity? If this horror continued, it would mean that in another decade other representatives of the Navy would say, "We must have six millions of money and 30,000 more men." There had been experience of how the thing was worked. A vast sum of money was called for by the naval and military authorities, and this being granted, the House was told—

> "Now we are all right, we shall have the finest ships manned by the finest men in the world."

But in a few years, the money being spent, and the people who benefited by the expenditure being gorged like a boa constrictor after swallowing a sheep, at last began to get hungry again, and more expenditure was called for. The way to get expenditure was to get up a scare, for there was nothing John Bull liked so much as a scare. So then, in a few years, the people would be told that we really had no Navy, that our ships were useless, the money had been thrown away, and we were defenceless. There was an example in a recent *Times* comment—

> "We doubt if we could put an effective Army Corps in the field, after all the optimist tolk of the War Minister."

Newspaper editors would be set to work at the right time, meetings would be held in the City presided over by the Lord Mayor, who would be supported by aldermen, stockjobbers, and others. Lord Salisbury would perhaps speak, and gallant admirals and generals would pull the British lion's tail and wave the Union Jack, the voice of the Jingo would be heard in the land, and then constructors, contractors, boiler makers, and the rest would be comforted, the Income Tax would go up, and millions would be gathered in to the accompaniment of the Alleluia Chorus from Liberal Dockyard Members. Everybody knew that, as a description of what would take place, everybody knew that when this money was spent there would be this thing over again. A splendid thing this for the constructors and boiler makers and others; but how was it for the working mass of the population? How would they stand it? There was an old public-house sign, the "Five Alls," meaning the King who governed all, the Lord Chancellor who pleaded for all, the Bishop who prayed for all, the General who fought for all, and the working man who paid for all.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: No; the ploughman.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON: That was a working man.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: But a particular class of working man.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON said, it had been estimated that the working man worked half an hour more daily to maintain these enormous armaments. Think of that, in a country full of poverty, misery, and wretchedness! Thirty-six millions in the year taken for the Army and Navy, taken from reproductive labour, increasing the misery, want, and destitution among the people! Talk of the Eight Hours' movement, he wished that the working men representatives were present to vote with him against these bloated armaments, with the intention of showing how in some measure something could be done to make the lives of the poor brighter. What had been the result among the great military nations? If we followed in the same path we should have the same result as there was in Germany, where militaryism was in the ascendant, and where also were the seeds of sedition, anarchy, and despair; or, as in France, now starting a filibustering expedition almost as bad as any we had carried out ourselves; or, as in Italy, which country, apeing the big armaments of other Powers, had made their land one in which life was scarcely worth living by the working classes. Now England was called upon to play the same miserable *role.* Against such a policy he would, by voice and vote, protest, because until the Government had tried, and tried effectually, to make arrangements with other nations to settle disputes by reason, they had no right to enter upon this game of beggar my neighbour in the contest of means of slaughter. Published letters from the Continent showed that even now foreign Governments only wanted for some Power to take the initiative to follow the example in reducing such expenditure; and it would be a noble action for England to take that initiative. He did not care for being called a Little Englander. He would have this a peaceful, honest, prosperous England, under rational conditions; and because it was not rational to vote these enormous sums, he would divide against the Vote. He Moved the reduction of the Vote by £1,000.

MR. WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead) said, that after hearing the speech of the right hon. Baronet he had come to the conclusion that the hon. Member must have been asleep for a great number of years like Rip van Winkle. The hon. Baronet forgot the fact that we were living in an age of iron, steel, and steam. He forgot that one could not build an ironclad in the same rapidity with which men built a 74-gun ship 100 years ago. He forgot the fact that the progress made in science had culminated in the construction of huge vessels. Everything was huge now by comparison with what existed 50 or 100 years ago. The hon. Baronet also forgot that this was an era of high wages and short hours of labour. He forgot that this was an age of steam engines and good boilers, and he ought to know that a line-of-battle ship cost a million of money, for which sum ten 74-gun ships could be put afloat 80 years ago. There was another consideration which the hon. Baronet overlooked. We were an insular nation; if our frontiers had been adjacent to those of other nations we should have had conscription rampant in this land. Every man would have been liable to shoulder a musket, and huge armed camps would have been established in the country. But our bulwark was the sea, in which lay the highways to and fro our home. It became, therefore, an absolute necessity for this nation to be in a condition to hold those highways at all hazards against those who might dare to obstruct them. We must have cheap food for our working men; the days had gone past of dear food for our toilers. In the event of war with a strong naval power, the four-pound loaf must not be increased in price. How was all this to be secured? It could not be secured without a perfect fleet to keep our highways open so that all our food stuffs could be brought in without let or hindrance. We could only make sure of such a position by being free of the sea. No doubt it was painful to spend 20,000,000. Every right-thinking man deplored the necessity, but the expense must be borne for our security. He held the expenditure upon our Navy to be nothing more nor less than the nation's premium in its life insurance-policy. As a Radical he would gladly welcome the dawn of the millennium but as yet there were no signs of universal peace and brotherhood. The aspirations of the poets and other good men were not yet fulfilled, and until they were we must not allow ourselves to grow weak upon the seas. Let them reduce Army expenditure as much as they liked; but they could not reduce the fleet. They might look forward to a still greater expenditure upon the fleet as time went on. Science demanded it. Larger docks and more of them were wanted for warships: docks on the east coast, docks on the west coast, and docks on the Irish coast!

THE CHAIRMAN said that the hon. Member was now travelling beyond the limits of the Vote before the Committee.

MR. ALLAN said that he would conclude by recalling what Sir Walter Raleigh once said in reference to England:—

> "The nation that commands the sea commands the commerce of the world; commanding the commerce of the world you command the riches of the world."

We were that nation. It was the duty,

therefore, of every Briton worthy of the name to support any and every Government whose policy was based on the principle of always maintaing the strength of the Navy, for upon that policy—he said it fearlessly as a Radical—depended the greatness of the British Empire.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL said, that when the Civil Lord of the Admiralty induced the Committee to close the general discussion the other night, there still remained a great many Members who desired to speak on the general question. Those hon. Members would now have to discuss the questions in which they were specially interested on the details of the Estimates. There were points which they must raise in the interests of their constituents and the country, and they must now be raised on the Votes as they were reached, because they could not be raised in the general Debates in consequence of the action of the Civil Lord. He regretted that there was not a Minister of Cabinet rank who was charged with the duty of presenting in that House the Estimates for the greatest of our spending Departments. He had the greatest respect for the abilities and capacity of the Civil Lord, but the admiration for that hon. Member did not make him a Member of the Cabinet. And the fact remained—that they had to discuss these great Naval questions without the assistance of the First Lord of the Admiralty, whose place was elsewhere. One of the results of this state of things was that they were often compelled to discuss at great length matters which could be disposed of comparatively briefly if the Frst Lord were only present in that House. The Civil Lord that evening had said that to three or four questions which had been asked he could only reply after reference to his Chief. They were supposed now to sanction a large expenditure for officers and seamen before they knew what would be the final policy of the Government respecting the ships which these men were to man. He had consulted a great many eminent Naval experts, who said that there were serious faults in the type of the ships recommended in the programme of the Government. If that programme were amended, there might be a vital and material difference in the number of officers and men and engine-room staff required. Yet they were asked to vote this money for the men in ignorance of the character of the vessels for which they would be wanted. Our past experience showed that the command of the sea depended upon an absolute supremacy in battle-ships; but the present programme of the Admiralty did not provide for a single new battleship. That was a very serious defect in the programme. Complaints had been made with respect to our training ships and some of our dockyards; and as yet no satisfactory explanation had been given. It had been acknowledged that the effort of the Admiralty last year to enlist men into the Navy directly from the Mercantile Marine was a dead failure. Now they heard that a new experiment had been made, and that a ship had been sent to different ports for the purpose of inducing boys to join the Navy. The Civil Lord had not informed the Committee how far the cruise had been a success in relation to the cost of the process. He did not see that by going to the large seaports any security was offered that the boys who were recruited should be boys with sea training, and he thought on this point much more information was desirable before the country was pledged to the expenditure involved. So far as he had observed, the chief appreciation of the visits of the *Northampton* came from the tradesman and the shopkeeper, who found considerable profit from the presence of a large man-of-war in the port; and he doubted whether this appreciation came from any earnest desire to supply boys to the Navy. He would not say that the hon. Baronet was in any sense a Rip Van Winkle; on the contrary, he was one of the most lively and wide-a-wake representatives of the "Little England" school, and for that reason he was most strenously opposed to the hon. Baronet and all his arguments.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) reminded the Committee that 12 years ago, speaking roughly, the expenditure on the Army and the Navy was £26,000,000, whereas at present it was about £40,000,000. Including the expenditure on the Indian Army, the national charge for armaments came to the monstrous sum of £58,000,000. The reason of this perpetually-increasing expenditure was that every now and then there was a scare in the newspapers, and Ministers were very much given to these scares; while Naval gentlemen, naturally desirous that their service should be magnified, did their best to convince the country that our whole Empire was in danger of falling to pieces unless each year we spent additional millions on the Navy. There was no satisfying these gentlemen; whatever Ministers did, and whatever amounts they were ready to spend on the Navy, the Naval experts, and Admirals, and such-like people always were complaining and crying—"More, more!" How did this mania for expenditure originate? It originated in a speech made by the noble Lord the late First Lord of the Admiralty, who laid down the extraordinary doctrine that we ought to have a Fleet equal in strength to that of any two fleets in the whole world. Hon. Gentlemen accepted that; but could they say what had occurred since that most incautious statement was made? Why, other countries were not prepared to admit that we ought to have a Fleet that could sweep off in a moment the fleets of any two nations. As we build ships, they build ships. Therefore, we we were engaged in a game of beggar-my-neighbour—not against one, but against two Powers. Was he to understand that in case of a war we ought to have such a Navy that we should be able to drive off at once any belligerent from the ocean, so that our commercial marine would be enabled to continue their business as though there were no war? The thing was impossible and absurd. One knew perfectly well that the mere chance of an *Alabama* slipping out of harbour would so raise the premium of insurance on British bottoms as against the premium on neutral bottoms that practically our commerce for the time would go into the hands of some neutral Power. He had seen discussions as to whether we ought to defend the Mediterranean or not. Now it was very obvious we should require a much stronger Navy in the event of war, say with France and Russsia—*absit omen*—if we were obliged to maintain our flag in the Mediterranean, than if we were to withdraw from the Mediterranean. [Sir C. DILKE: "No."] He should say the less seas we had to defend, the less Navy we required in order to defend them, and it would be infinitely simpler in his judgment, to block the Mediterranean at Gibraltar, and Aden, and Pem , than to seek to defend it. In the Parliament of 1880, under the Ministry of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, he believed there was a Departmental Committee which considered this question, and he had always understood this Committee decided that it would be necessary, in our own interests, to withdraw from the Mediterranean *pro tem.* instead of remaining merely for the purpose of protecting our coasting trade, and to send everything round by the Cape to India. The hon. Member opposite spoke in a sneering way of "Little Englanders;" but the poor "Little Englanders," it must be remembered, had practically to pay for everything. Who were the so-called "Little Englanders" but the right hon. Member for Midlothian, his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland. There (pointing to the Treasury Bench) sat the "Little Englanders." And what he complained of was that these right hon. Gentlemen would not stand honestly and persistently by the opinions they professed when out of office, but now, when they were in office, they went wasting and squandering money just as if they were Conservatives. Formerly there was a way of stopping, to a certain extent, this vast expenditure upon military armaments. When hon. Gentlemen opposite were in power they were always prone to spend large sums of money. But they were always attacked by their opponents. Now it seemed to be a competition between the two Parties which should spend the greatest amount of money on the Navy. Thus, when the Civil Lord of the Admiralty made his statement, the late First Lord, instead of protesting that the amount to be spent was not large enough, congratulated the hon. Gentlemen on the proposals he had made. On reading that statement he could not help remembering that it was laid down in former times that the heads of the two great spending Departments should be in the House of Commons. He should not object to his hon. Friend being First Lord of the Admiralty. But he was not; the First Lord was somewhere else.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): He has always been in another place in the case of a Liberal Government.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, if that was so it was a shameful and melancholy thing. It would be admitted that the right hon. Member for Midlothian was himself always against this vast expenditure. He only regretted that the right hon. Gentleman was not present, for he was sure he would denounce this wild and reckless expenditure on the part of the Government. He did not himself believe that these large armaments tended to peace. When you had these huge armaments, you next felt that you ought to use them, and you were apt to meddle in matters of foreign policy that did not concern you. He admitted that it was desirable that we should have a Navy sufficient for defence; but he protested against the Navy being swollen to such a degree as to become a menace to every other Power. They were not ashamed to be little Englanders, and would Vote cordially for the reduction of the vote, believing it to be desirable that they should register some protest against this vast advance in the expenditure on the Navy.

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) desired to explain why he could not Vote in support of the Amendment of his hon. Friend, to whom they were indebted for bringing this subject before the House. Many people shared his hon. Friend's view with regard to the increasing expenditure upon the Navy, but the weak point in his hon. Friend's speech was that he did not suggest one single item upon which expenditure was too heavy. Then he did not make any suggestion as to the limitation of expenditure in the future. Looking at the expenditure of the last ten years and to the possibilities of the future, he thought the present situation was one which no Radical, and no Conservative even could view with any degree of favour. But the hon. Baronet contented himself with a quotation from Sir Robert Peel that we ought to have sufficient retrenchment in time of peace almost to run a risk so far as war was concerned. He did not believe that was the view of the Radicals of the country. He would vote for the Government—if he voted at all—on the present occasion, because they were in a better position than he could be to judge of the necessities of the country. But he desired to know what was the view of the Government as to the future. Did they contemplate that in the next ten years there would be an annual increase such as had taken place in the last 10 years? Did they think that this rivalry between the nations of the world, so far as Naval power was concerned, would continue? France and Russia were building ships year after year. Would it settle the question if we gave up our Navy to-morrow? He understood that his hon. Friend who Moved the Amendment was against the whole expenditure.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON: I objected to the enormous expenditure. I did not go into details.

Mr. DALZIEL asked whether the Government would be any nearer a settlement if they gave up the proposed Estimates for the current year? Had they any guarantee that if this country ceased to build ships, other countries would cease also. He thought the time had come when some arrangement should be arrived at with other nations. Had the Government ever considered the possibility of such an arrangement? He did not see that it ought to be impossible to make such an arrangement on the basis of this country retaining its present superiority. He appealed to the Civil Lord to say whether the Government was prepared to take any steps to bring about a conference of nations in order to see whether some arrangement could not be arrived at which would be acceptable to this country, and which certainly would be in the best interests of all the countries concerned.

Captain BETHELL said, it was very satisfactory to hear a Radical of the extreme type of the hon. Gentleman assert himself so vigorously on the side of those who wished to maintain the Navy of this country. The sums now voted for the Navy, large and increasing though they were, were in proportion to the wealth and commerce of the country and the duty that the Government had to perform, small in comparison to what they were even in the last war. The hon. Member for Northampton asked whether they proposed to sweep away from the seas in case of war, all hostile vessels, and said he believed such an idea to be impossible and absurd. And yet it was by sweeping away almost all hostile vessels in olden times that we did succeed in bringing to a happy conclusion a war which last for very many years. He did not believe that these sums of money, large as they were, expended in increasing the strength of the Navy were wasted now, when, as all the world knew, in the last few years there had been times when the possibilities of war were very close. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) had assured the Committee that it was the duty of this country, in case of a war, to shut up the Mediterranean, but such an idea was a mistake, founded, in his belief, upon a misconception of the history of our past wars. Apart from the great damage that would be done to commerce in the Mediterranean itself, he would point out that in almost every war most of our successes were due to the fact that, in our operations in the Mediterranean, we were in the centre of the field where naval operations could be carried on to the distress of the enemy. This fact would inevitably repeat itself in future wars. He believed that those who advocated the closing of the Mediterranean did much damage in pressing such views on the Government of the day. He hoped that the speech they had just listened to was an indication of abiding vigour in faith in the strength of the Navy, which, he believed, existed in Radical as well as Conservative circles. Among the people of this country, during the past few years, there had been a revival in favour of our having a strong, and even a very strong, Navy. The hon. Member for the Forest of Dean (Sir C. Dilke) as well as other Liberals, had taken a strong line on this question, and he thought this might be taken as an indication of a general consensus of opinion throughout the country. They might, therefore, congratulate the Government on the firm line they had taken up in boldly recommending to their followers and the Committee so great an expenditure.

Mr. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.), while regretting that the Member for Cockermouth and the Member for Northampton had, no doubt unintentionally, misled the Committee, pointed out that it was a delusion to say that there had never been so great an expenditure upon the Navy. [An hon. Member: "In time of peace."] At a time this country was, it was true, at war, but when there was not a single organised hostile naval squadron in European waters, this country spent £19,000,000 sterling upon her Navy Estimates during the 11 consecutive years 1805–1815. There was then no organised naval force in the world to oppose us; only 5 per cent. of what we ate came over the seas; the cost of a battleship was only one-tenth of what it was now, while the population had since increased four-fold. If the alternative were put before any voter in this country whether he would wipe off the cost of that expenditure or take the assets it represented in the form of our great colonies, what conclusion would he come to? The Committee were really wasting time over this Amendment. He could understand the position of the Member for Cockermouth if he had come down and said that all our expenditure upon the Navy was wrong, and that we ought, in case of any dispute, to resort to arbitration; but he could not understand by what right the hon. Member and the Member for Northampton could say that a particular sum was enough for our naval requirements. If they reduced the expenditure to a point which they did not consider to be enormous, then every single sixpence spent that would not enable the Navy to do its work was absolutely money wasted and cast into the sea. They did not pretend to tell the Committee that they had considered the question of what sum would, in their views, suffice, but they said that the sum now asked was extravagant. He would retort upon those hon. Members that if they succeeded in reducing the expenditure upon the Navy to a point at which the Navy would not do its work properly, it was they who were extravagant, because whatever money was then spent would not enable the Navy to do the work for which it was intended. He, however, sympathised with the hon. Member for Northampton when he complained that this country was paying all the cost of the increase in the Navy. We were, in fact, paying 89–90ths, while the Colonies were getting the benefit of that increased expenditure. There was no contribution from Canada towards the cost of the Navy, while the contribution from our Australian Colonies was ludicrously small. If there was to be economy, it might well come from the Colonies, which shared so largely in the benefits and protection of the Navy. He had addressed audiences of different complexions in politics on the subject of the Navy, and he would undertake to obtain a majority of votes from any constituency in the country on the question of the present Amendment. The Patronage Secretary, it was true, had gone down to a remote corner in Wales and there made a statement which no schoolboy out of the 4th Standard would be allowed to make elsewhere, that the only damage from a great naval war would arise to the great landowners and the dukes, and that all this increased expenditure was being asked to please the landowners and the lords. Could there be anything so preposterous? The miners well knew that they themselves would be great sufferers from a great naval war. He should certainly vote against the Amendment.

*Mr. C. H. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, Middleton) strongly supported the Amendment, and as strongly repudiated what had been said by the last speaker. The large additions to the naval expenditure exhibited a consistency worthy of a better cause, and had gone on from year to year. The Civil Lord appealed to the Committee in vigorous language, but with a surrender of all Radical principles that astonished him. They were invited to follow up former extravagance by fresh extravagance, but he could not conceive why they were less safe formerly than they were now. In past times they existed in the belief that they had a good Army and a good Navy. They had endeavoured to mature and improve both, and now they were suddenly told that they were defenceless. It would appear that they were in the position of a man who had so much wealth that he could not defend himself unless he surrounded himself with watchmen, and yielded to daily nervousness and apprehension. The other day there was a debate in the French Chamber, and there it was declared that England possessed a Navy twice the size of the French Navy. Again, they were always making speeches, which must be intolerable, assuming that France, and, indeed, Russia too, would always be against them. Language was used which must be very hurtful to the French people to read. They had got a fleet which they could barely man, and if they were to go on as they were doing they would have to return to the old pressgang, if not their big ships would have to lie up to rot or rust. Their policy was forcing other nations into this contest of shipbuilding, and the mind was appalled at what the future state of the country would be if their resources were to be strained to the uttermost by these heavy armaments. He desired to make his protest against such a policy.

*Sir C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said, the first question he should like to ask the hon. Members who had moved and supported this Amendment was—why their attacks on the cost of armaments were made on the naval rather than on the military estimates? [An hon. Member: "Because the Naval Estimates are growing up."] Then they did not attack the Army Estimates only because they were the same as last year. No policy could be conceived more foolish. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was classed as an anti-Jingo, and yet he consented, and willingly consented, to the increase in the Navy Estimates. Was not the presumption that these Estimates were more than justified this year? Was not the presumption the other way as regarded the stationary Army Votes. The hon. Member who had just sat down referred to a speech made recently in the French Chamber showing that the naval strength of this country was overwhelming. Why, that speech was immediately answered by the representative of the French Navy, and the statement was overwhelmingly disproved. In fact, it was shown that that speech was as vague and windy as some of the speeches, if he might say so with respect, made that night in the House. Again, it was said if they continued building largely, the French and other Powers would continue to build up to them. When, for some years, they had no definite programme, France and Russia built rapidly; recently, when England was carrying out its new programme, the French reduced their programme. It was a fact well worthy of notice;

but whether it was so or not, a strong fleet was necessary to the existence of this country, and not necessary to the existence of any other country. Their existence was undoubtedly at stake, and it could be no principle of Radicals or any other Party to leave this country, with its heterogeneous land forces, at the mercy of invasion. At any risk of being called alarmists, they could see no answer to this question—that, if they allowed their fleet to sink below a strength capable of holding all the seas against any possible foe, they would be liable to invasion? If they could not hold the seas, they would be brought into competition with the great military nations of the Continent. It was said that they were needlessly alarmed as to an alliance between two Great Powers—but, if one moved, the other would be compelled to move. He happened, recently, to be talking to one who laughed at their fears of invasion. He said to him :—

> "If Russia were to go to war for any reason whatever, would you not be obliged to follow her?"

The reply was in the affirmative, but to the effect that Russia was most peaceful. Were they certain that nothing would occur between us and either of these two Powers? At this very moment six British battalions, with an equivalent Native force were to be marched towards Chitral, and that step would not be taken unless there was something serious in the situation, in spite of the peaceful relations existing at the present moment. It was asked, if this increase was necessary, had they been defenceless in the past? Well, the increase did not bring them relatively to a higher point than that which they occupied in the past. His hon. Friend pointed out that if they wanted to lessen their naval expenditure they could quit the Mediterranean Sea. His hon. Friend, however, had mixed up two things. He agreed with the hon. Member for Northampton in certain portions of his Mediterranean policy. From the purely naval or military point of view he had never believed in the occupation of Egypt; we should have been stronger without it. But being as it was, the argument rather implied a stronger naval position in the Mediterranean, for it rested on the view that Egypt must follow the command of the seas. His hon. Friend had suggested that in a serious war against any of the great Powers the Mediterranean could not be made use of as a trade route, and that our ships would have to go round the Cape. But it did not follow that if we left the Mediterranean we could carry out our defence more cheaply than at the present time. Although there was a difference of opinion among naval men on this Mediterranean question, he asserted that it had never yet been proved that we could defend ourselves more cheaply on the high seas by masking the Mediterranean from the Atlantic and Red Sea than by holding the Mediterranean itself. It would be much better and safer to have no division at all, but to command all the seas. If they had an enemy's fleet careering about the sea, then the disputed command of the seas could not last long. It must be settled one way or another, and if it was settled against this country we had no shadow of power to defend ourselves here against invasion. He thought, therefore, that undivided command of the seas was necessary to our existence. The hon. Member for Northampton also said that the existence ef great armaments tended to war. He doubted, however, whether that was the case, even with regard to the great armaments of the Continent. Although at great cost, peace had been kept for a considerable period in face of those great armaments, and the increase of a peace feeling in so-called military countries of the Continent was a fact which rather told against his hon. Friend. A great British fleet, instead of tending towards war, tended rather towards peace. A fleet was not an aggressive force unless they were preparing it for the purpose of covering a military invasion, and certainly no one could believe that the object of the British fleet was to cover an invasion of a foreign country by means of the British land forces. Unless that was intended, in what sense did a British fleet tend towards war? The people of this country were never so free from those alarms which caused war, whatever their Army might be, as when they knew that they would be able to sleep secure in the possession of an overwhelmingly strong fleet. It was quite true that the contributions from the colonies and from India towards our fleet were not what they ought to be, but whether it was possible to increase them was another matter. At all events, a strong British fleet formed the most real bond of union between this country and its colonies. The colonies might be involved in the consequences of our wars without possessing any voice with regard to them; and in his judgment it was something that this country should be able to offer to them that security which the colonies would undoubtedly obtain from the presence of the British fleet in all portions of the world.

Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) asked what evidence had been brought before the House of Commons to show that this great expenditure on the Navy was necessary. During the last 20 years the country had evidence to show that it had got on exceedingly well without the increased naval expenditure of recent years, while he maintained that the tendency in favour of peace had increased. This protest against increased naval expenditure was raised at this time because the Navy Estimates were increasing, and that was the most solid argument which he desired to address to the Committee. Naval expenditure increased by three and a-half millions last year. Why could not the Government wait until they had digested that great meal, and see whether or not the country had obtained value for its money. The late First Lord of the Admiralty increased the expenditure by £2,500,000, and then kept it steady for two or three years, until the country possessed evidence showing that the money had been well spent. In his opinion the Government would have been well advised if they had contented themselves with the great increase of Naval expenditure last year, afterwards waiting two or three years in order to see results before increasing it further this year. The Government did not secure the safety of the Nation by this means, because increased Naval and Military expenditure tended rather to stimulate the rivalry of other Powers. It was generally admitted that since we had begun this aggressive policy with regard to the Navy, the fleets of France and of other Powers had been greatly increased. This was the natural tendency, and he thought it might be worthy of consideration as to whether we could not set an example among the nations in this matter, and certainly we ought to proceed more slowly to the end which was thought eventually to be desirable. Experts were not agreed as to the best means of obtaining the highest result out of this vast expenditure. The hon. Member for Gateshead had shown, for example, in the debate last week, that many of our ships had not sound boilers in them, and he suggested that we could make experiments on a less expensive scale than was at present the practice. The opinion well represented in the House was the opinion of the rich Metropolitan community. On this community the great expenditure did not press very heavily; but on the agricultural districts and on Ireland it fell with ruinous effect. Did the Committee not believe that there was some connection between the famine in Ireland and the great expenditure now going on through these Estimates in a time of profound peace? He was glad his hon. Friend had made a protest. He was not a "Little Englander," neither was he in favour of a weak Navy; but he maintained that we ought to proceed more quietly. To use the language of golf, we had better not "press." It seemed to him that the Government were "pressing," and becoming a little heated and excited.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said there was nothing new in the Estimates which had been challenged by the hon. Member for Cockermouth. All that the Government was doing this year was to carry out the plan laid before the House last year, and which was then unanimously adopted. The Government had fair cause of complaint that this Motion should have been made at this time and in this way. The House had unanimously voted the men asked for; the ships had already been obtained; and in contempt of all this, apparently, the money was to be denied. As the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean had pointed out, this attack on armaments was made against the Navy as distinguished from the Army; and if this discrimination had not been made, the Motion would have found no support. The supremacy of the British Navy was the question involved. That question had been in the forefront of our legislation since the

Naval Defence Act. All statesmen of all Parties would admit that. He wished to remind his hon. Friends of the way in which this question was regarded by a man so well worthy of their admiration as Mr. Cobden. Alluding to a certain Power, supposed to be our rival in respect of Naval supremacy, Mr. Cobden said—

> "She has less than one-quarter of our mercantile marine. She has not one-hundredth part of our possessions to defend beyond the seas. She has more than double our military force; and while on land her frontier gives her access to the continent, and thereby to the whole world, we have no means of communication with any other country but by water."

What was Mr. Cobden's conclusion from those facts?

> "She has, therefore, no necessity for, and no legitimate pretension to, equality with us at sea."

After suggesting that there should be frank explanation between the different countries on this subject, Mr. Cobden continued—

> "There is no amount of expenditure which this country would not bear to maintain our due superiority at sea."

All the conditions which Mr. Cobden mentioned at that time—30 years ago—as reasons for a strong Navy had changed since, but they had changed in the direction of demanding a stronger rather than a weaker Navy. In 1833 Mr. Cobden spoke of the mercantile marine of the United States as being not much less than that of the United Kingdom. In 1866 he spoke of the mercantile marine of France as being one-quarter of that of Great Britain. What were the facts now? Including vessels of over 100 tons, and neglecting all others, the mercantile marine of Great Britain was more than one-half of that of the entire world. In steam shipping alone it was 62½ per cent. of the shipping of the entire world. France stood in the relation of 1,050,000 tons to 12,788,000 tons, and the total tonnage of the United States was under 2,000,000 tons. If the argument which Mr. Cobden used was good for a Radical such as he was, surely in the present day, when the excess of our mercantile marine over that of any other country was still greater, the same argument was valid in a much greater degree. He had referred to some of the figures relating to the increase of the last 10 years, and he saw that the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth had been impressed with those figures. The mercantile marine of Great Britain had been added to in the last 10 years to the extent of 2,000,000 of registered tonnage. The hon. Member for Islington had said that the steady increase in the Vote was the strongest reason for objecting to it. There was another Vote which had doubled in the same period—the Education Vote—and he hoped that that would not be a reason for the hon. Member objecting to that Vote. The hon. Member for Northampton, whose speech he had enjoyed immensely, had referred to the Chancellor of the Exchequer—who was primarily responsible for all the money voted—as if the right hon. Gentleman were an orthodox supporter of the "little Navy" policy. What did the Chancellor of the Exchequer say last year on this very question, speaking in reply to strong assertions about our naval supremacy from the Opposition side of the House?—

> "Do not for a moment doubt that we mean to maintain the supremacy of the British Navy. We hold, as strongly as you do, or as any man in this House can hold, that the greatness, the might, and the existence of England depend upon her Navy and its supremacy."

That was the language of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Naval policy of which these present Estimates were an instalment. It being admitted that our Navy should be at least as strong as the Navies of any two Powers which might combine against us, the rest was a question of *technique* and calculation upon which the Admiralty must take the best opinion of professional advisers. That had been done, and the Government were acting by the light of that advice. He did not admit or believe that there was one unnecessary cruiser or one superfluous battleship in the programme. A conference with foreign nations had been suggested. The Committee would not expect him to deal with a high Cabinet question of that sort, but he entirely sympathised with the spirit of the suggestion. It was not with any light heart that the Government presented Estimates so burdensome, and they deplored, while they strongly affirmed, the necessity for such expenditure.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said, that the remarkable development of feeling in regard to the Navy on the other side of the House was a most interesting fact. If the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy had made his speech 10 or 12 years ago, he would have been howled down by by those who sat around him. At the present time, our expenditure of over 18 millions on the Navy amounted to 1·93 per cent. of the total value of our sea-borne commerce. Last year's expenditure in France was 3·9 per cent. of the value of her sea-borne commerce, and that of Russia was 9 per cent. Again, taking as a comparison the value of the mercantile marine, our naval expenditure was 15 per cent., that of France was 105 per cent., and that of Russia was 166 per cent. That was a sufficient answer to those who held that the present expenditure was excessive. Our expenditure was an insurance, and by no means an excessive insurance in view of the great interests to be maintained.

*Mr. W. R. CREMER (Haggerston): Upwards of 8 per cent.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said, the hon. Gentleman was quite wrong. The naval expenditure was less than two per cent. on the total value of our sea-borne commerce.

*Mr. CREMER said, he made his statement on the authority of Mr. Maclean, the ex-Conservative Member for Oldham.

Sir E. ASHMEAD - BARTLETT said, the hon. Member could easily satisfy himself. The total value of our sea-borne commerce was about £970,000,000, and our Naval Estimates this year amounted to £18,700,000. £18,700,000 to £970,000,000 stood at less than two per cent. The other point to which he wished to refer was the question of the possible abandonment of the Mediterranean in time of war. No more unfortunate idea could get abroad than that our Naval Authorities or our Government proposed to abandon, or even to mask, the Mediterranean in time of war. Such a step would certainly involve the loss of Egypt and a great portion of our commerce which went through the Mediterranean. But there was another and a far more important consideration. In time of a great European war we hoped to have allies. There was a great and friendly nation in the Mediterranean whose naval power entirely existed in that sea, and whom we might expect to have on our side in case we were involved in war with two other Great Powers. The existence of that Great Power, the existence of the Italian Navy and our probable alliance with Italy, would render our abandonment of the Mediterranean impossible. In his opinion, the Naval Estimates proposed this year were demanded by the absolute necessities of the case. At this moment the French and Russian Navies were two or three battleships stronger than the British Navy, and at the end of 1897, if there was no increase in the British Navy, the French and Russian Navies would be seven or eight battleships stronger than our Navy. In view of the present strength of the Navy, the conclusion they must come to was that the proposals of the Government were by no means excessive, and that the motion of the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth ought to be resisted by every Member who valued the naval strength of the country.

Dr. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire) regretted to have to interpose between hon. Members and their dinner, but he felt he had a duty to discharge in this matter. He was anxious to join in the protest against what he regarded not only as lavish, but reckless expenditure. He protested against the expenditure first of all as a man of peace. To make such gigantic preparation for war was entirely unsound. It would no doubt be said that preparation for war was the best means of insuring peace, but that was nothing more nor less than bunkum. Was there a Member of the House who would say that the existence of vast bodies of men armed to the teeth was not provocative of war? Such men were like fighting-cocks standing up against each other. The least spark thrown in amongst them would blow them up like a powder magazine. We were already overtaxed, and he objected as a Scotchman. If we were to have this vast expenditure on munitions of war, more ought to be spent in Scotland. Why should not some of the arsenals and dockyards be in Scotland? What was wrong with Dundee, for instance, or with Queensferry, or Greenock, or Glasgow? Why should they not receive some of the money? As a Scottish representative, he considered a great deal of the money might be better spent in enlarging holdings and stocking holdings for crofters and cottars, in building piers and harbours for the protection of the fishermen, and in constructing light railways to bring, in these depressed times, the produce of the agriculturists to the markets. The proposals had been made lucidly and eloquently by the Civil Lord, but he could not help regretting they had been made through the mouth of a Scotchman and a Scottish representative. He had wondered what the hon. Gentleman's constituents in Dundee would have said if they had heard him rattle off his millions of pounds. Would they not have said, with Dominie Sampson, "Ma conscience"? Depend upon it, when the Civil Lord returned to his constituents Ginx's baby would have something to say on the subject. What were we afraid of? What was this gigantic expenditure for? Were we afraid of France? Why, our beloved Queen was at this moment basking in the sunshine of the South of France, and overwhelmed with the greetings of the French people. No; the French were too much interested in peace, just as we were. Were we afraid of France and Russia combined? Russia could not go to war without borrowing money from England. Were we afraid of Italy? Italy was bankrupt. Were we afraid of Germany? Germany had enough to do at home in minding its own business. Danger might arise, but not yet. In 20 or 30 years' time our great sea rival would be the sturdy and hardy Jap.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The Vote before the Committee is that for money—Vote 1.

DR. MACGREGOR did not think he would get very far without getting out of order. The Rules of the House appeared to be made on the principle of "how not to do it."

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order! order!

DR. MACGREGOR said he was asking what all this was for. He held that the proposed expenditure meant nothing more nor less than the most rampant Jingoism. He was as much in favour of the defence of the country as anyone in the House, but he regarded the proposed programme of the Government as simply extravagant and unnecessary. At this moment the Jingoes in thousands were dancing for joy, and singing, "We've got the ships, we've got the men, and now we've got the money too." What a parody it was upon our boasted civilisation—upon our vaunted Christianity! What had become, he asked, of the party of retrenchment and reform? He had look upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the sturdy and reliable guardian of the national purse. The right hon. Gentleman was not present. Where was he? What had happened to him? Only last year he insisted upon taxing the Scottish national industry.

*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. T. W. MELLOR): Order! order! That has nothing to do with this Vote.

DR. MACGREGOR: I wished to ask what he has done with the money. Has he invested it in Consols?

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order! order!

DR. MACGREGOR: I pass from that point.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is wandering altogether from the subject.

DR. MACGREGOR: I hold that the tax he put on that industry has been spent on gunpowder.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order! order!

DR. MACGREGOR said he would conclude by saying that though his sentiments might be unpalatable and unpopular, they were none the less sincere on his part. He might be reminded that he was as a voice crying in the wilderness, but he had the consolation of feeling within a small voice which told him that, in making this protest, he had done his duty, not only to himself, but also to his constituents and his country.

*MR. W. R. CREMER Shoreditch, Haggerston) said, he thanked the hon. Member for Cockermouth for bringing forward his Amendment, and he hoped that, under any circumstances, he would press it to a Division as a protest against the shameful waste of the resources of the country by the proposals of the Government. The hon. Member for West Belfast had spoken very glibly about the extent to which the proposed increase of expenditure on the Navy was approved by the people in every part of the Kingdom; but it was a very remarkable fact that not one single petition had been presented on public meeting anywhere held in support of this increased expenditure on the Navy, whereas, last Session, a very important body of nearly 500 men, who were officers of working class organisations in the country, protested against the proposals then made by the Government to increase the expenditure on the Navy. A great deal had been said about the increased expenditure being necessary to protect our commercial Marine from danger. Seven years ago, when the then Conservative Government surprised the Nation by asking for an increased Vote of £21,000,000 to build ironclads and strengthen the Navy, the same argument was brought forward. In the House at that time were two hon. Members who had a vast interest in the commerce of the country—the hon. Members for Hull and Jarrow—and they ridiculed the idea of there being any danger to our commercial Marine, and said they were quite satisfied with the then condition of the Navy. But since that time millions had been spent on the Navy, and it had, therefore, been greatly strengthened. Yet the same old argument about danger to our commerce was repeated. From what had been said by the Civil Lord and several hon. Members, it might be imagined that the hon. Member for Cockermouth, and those who supported him, desired to disband the Navy altogether. That was not so; the question with them was whether so many millions more should be spent on a Navy which they thought was already sufficiently strong for all the purposes required. Another argument usually advanced on those occasions was that our Navy ought to be as strong as any two other Powers combined. When the question of the £21,000,000 increase was before the country seven years ago, and when this same argument was brought forward, he remembered stating to the House that only a short time before the demand was made, a Member of the Government, a Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood), actually declared at a meeting in the City of London that our Navy was then equal to the Navies of Russia and France combined, and adduced figures to prove it. Naturally, he asked the Government at the time for the reasons why, in the presence of this statement by one of their colleagues, they had asked for such an enormous increase; but he need hardly say that he had received no answer. But, if that statement was true—and he presumed it was—he wanted to know now, as he did then, what had occurred in the few months between the statement and the making of the demand to cause such a complete change of front on the part of the Government, and whether there was any real danger known to the Government which made the increase of expenditure necessary? The present proposals, however, were only a fulfilment of a prediction which some of them made seven years ago, that, notwithstanding that enormous increase of expenditure, a further demand for increasing the Navy would be made before many years. But it might be said that the Government knew where the real danger lay to our commerce and to the country. If that were so, he thought the Committee would be justified in demanding from the Government some evidence of the fact. He did not say the Government should tell them exactly where the danger was; but the Committee were entitled to ask them whether they had proof that any designs were meditated by any foreign Power against our commercial Marine, or against the shores of the country. Unless some emphatic statement of that kind was made he should support the Amendment in protest against the proposed increased expenditure. But he doubted whether the Government had any evidence of the kind at their disposal. It was an open secret that last year the Government themselves were not united on the question of increased Naval expenditure, and that this year the same differences existed in the Cabinet. No one would say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the minority of the Government who were opposed to this expenditure were less patriotic than the Jingo element in the Cabinet. If there was any real danger the Government must have been made acquainted with it, and then they would have been united upon the subject, but it was pretty well known that they were not. He was therefore justified in assuming that there was no danger. He admitted that a strong feeling of bitterness and animosity against this country was shown by a section of the French Press; and he found, during some visits he paid to Paris last summer, that this feeling was more or less shared by many French politicians.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): A very good argument for the Vote.

*Mr. CREMER said that if the hon. Member had waited for another minute he would probably have refrained from making that statement. Well, he was determined to try and discover whether this feeling prevailed amongst the people. He therefore mixed pretty freely amongst the people in the working class quarters of Paris, and at meetings of the people he put the question plainly whether they shared in those feelings of bitterness and animosity towards this country, and in every instance, without a single exception, the idea that the people of France, and especially the working-classes of France, have any ill-feeling against this country was laughed to scorn. He therefore thought he was justified in saying that no danger need be feared from France. He was sorry a much larger reduction in the Vote had not been moved. He, for one, was opposed to the expenditure of a single extra penny on the Navy until some reliable evidence of real danger was produced by the Government. If this extra expenditure was likely to diminish the evil in the slightest degree, he would probably be found supporting it. But he had fully satisfied himself, from the observations of many years, that increased expenditure on the Army and on the Navy tended to aggravate rather than to diminish the evil, besides, it would give to the French newspaers an opportunity, of which they would not be slow to avail themselves, of saying that those preparations on the part of Great Britain were intended as a menace to France. During the past few months there had been a great deal of discussion concerning the terrible condition of the unemployed, and it was during such an inopportune time that the Government proposed to expend millions more upon the Navy. One hon. Member of the House, giving evidence before the Committee on the unemployed, suggested that the State should in times of distress vote sums of money.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order. I think the hon. Member is not now speaking to the Vote.

Mr. CREMER said, he bowed to the decision of the Chair, and would content himself with saying that when the hundredsof thousands of people who had been suffering the pangs of hunger during the present winter looked to the House for some means of relief, the doors of the House were closed against them, and it was said it was not the function of Parliament to vote money to relieve distress amongst the people, while at the same time it voted many extra millions for the Navy. In fact, the starving people asked for bread, but instead of bread the Government gave them iron-clads.

*Mr. W. P. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) said, the Civil Lord of the Admiralty had argued that the extension made in the Naval scheme of the Government was necessary on the best possible advice taken by the Admiralty. But was not that as much as to say that the policy of the Government was determined, and opinions of Members of the House silenced by permanent officials? The latter were a most estimable and useful class of public servants, against whom he certainly would not say a single word. But the policy of the Government, as regarded Naval expenditure and our relations with foreign nations, ought not to be determined by permanent officials. The Civil Lord further said the command of the sea was necessary to Great Britain. It seemed that the utterances of a few platitudes about England having supremacy at sea was intended to do duty as a reply to arguments from the Radical Benches. It was merely begging the whole question. All admitted that we must have the command of the sea, an adequate Navy, and so forth. The whole question was, What was an adequate Navy? He was appalled at the light-heartedness with which the House of Commons was continually voting increased money for the maintenance of our Imperial defences. Then the Civil Lord said they had chosen the wrong time for the Motion before the Committee; it should have been made on the Vote for men and not for money.

The right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean said it should have been on the Army and not the Navy. For his own part, he was willing to admit that his hon. Friend might have chosen an inappropriate moment or form of procedure for bringing his Motion before the Committee; but he cared little for the form. It was the spirit of the thing that he cared for, and he thought it had been shown clearly enough that a strong feeling existed that we were going forward too carelessly in the matter of national armaments. It was quite true that they had been wounded in the house of their friends, but he did not think the speeches of the hon. Members for Kirkcaldy and Gateshead had supplied any forcible arguments in favour of the position taken up by the hon. Member for the Holderness Division. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy seemed to be trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. He began his speech with the usual high-flown remarks about Britain having an efficient Navy and ruling the sea, which drew a good many cheers from the Opposition, and which he hoped he enjoyed. But he said he was against an extension of military and naval expenditure, and asked the Government how soon it would end. He "came to curse and remained to pray." At the beginning of his speech he was running with the hare, and at the end he was hunting with the hounds. The hon. Member for Gateshead, although he proclaimed himself a Radical and a man of peace, supported the whole of this large expenditure. But only two or three days ago, in that very House, he spoke of the expenditure upon the Navy as the squandering of national money.

MR. W. ALLAN (Gateshead): I referred to the boilers being constructed for the Navy when I spoke of the squandering of money.

*MR. BYLES: The hon. Member's words were: "The Government had rendered every ship in the Navy absolutely useless for full speed steaming," and asked the House whether they did not consider that squandering national money.

MR. ALLAN: That was an allusion to the boilers.

*MR. BYLES: If the Government had been squandering national money——

MR. ALLAN: On boilers.

*MR. BYLES: If the Government had been squandering national money in its Naval expenditure, and rendering every ship in the Navy useless for full speed steaming, then it justified the position which Radical Members took. It was true that Conservative Members had supported the Naval expenditure of the Government. But it used not to be so. An illustrious Member of this House, the Member for Midlothian (the right hon. W. E. Gladstone) who used to make speeches in favour of economy a few years ago, said:—

> "What I desire from the bottom of my heart is to see the question of economy once more what it was in the first twenty years of my political life—a question in which there was no distinction of Party, in which each Party vied with the other in real and energetic attempts to keep down public expenditure."

He was afraid there would be few in the Lobby in which he intended to vote, and no representative of the Conservative Party. The days when they joined in the cry of economy were apparently past. But he trusted the electors would wake up and send men to that House who would insist on the old Liberal policy of retrenchment. An argument which had been common in the Debate was, that the armaments of one country increased in accordance with the increased armaments of another; in other words, we spent more money on the Navy because the French spent more money on theirs, and the French spent more money on their Navy because we spent more on ours; and so the pendulum swung backwards and forwards, till the expenditure of all the nations on warlike preparations had grown so large that the tax-payers of Europe were being weighed down with the burden of taxation, and the countries of Europe were being brought within measurable distance of bankruptcy. The suspicions which were entertained between nation and nation were fostered and encouraged by this expenditure. In the recent Debate in the French Chamber, this suspicion had been expressed against ourselves. That day a Welsh Member had asked a question about fortifications for the Bristol Channel. The Member of the Government who answered him said that there were some other ports that were likely to be raided earlier. Who were the raiders expected to be? Did anyone fear invasion? In France there seemed to be fear on the part of some that we should invade that country.

A Deputy had solemnly averred that a Cabinet Council in this country, in November last, discussed the question of the invasion of France. It sounded to us rather absurd; but it was equally absurd and unworthy of us to think that the French contemplated the invasion of England. It might savour of presumption for unofficial Members to discuss the state of the Navy; what they were really doing was to avail themselves of a form of procedure for protesting against the growing expenditure on Imperial defence. If he were personally denied the right to an opinion he would shelter himself behind Lord Randolph Churchill, who, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, on receiving the Army and Navy Estimates, said they were too large, that he was in favour of retrenchment and economy, and that he was convinced, by what he had learned at the Treasury, that such a policy was not only necessary, but perfectly reasonable. All honour to him for sacrificing himself by resigning his office. This was eight years ago, when the total defensive expenditure had suddenly risen by six millions, from a ten years' average of £25,000,000 to £31,000,000. What would Lord Randolph Churchill have said if he had been amongst us now? Why, he would have voted for this proposed reduction. Lord Randolph Churchill also said he could not obtain any satisfactory assurance that the money was properly spent, and that he had a conviction that the reverse was the case; and he spoke of the scandalously defective Commissariat in Egypt, brittle swords, bending bayonets, jamming cartridges, bursting guns, the spending of a million by the Admiralty unknown to the Treasury, and vessels costing over a million proving a failure. Since then we had lost one by the incompetence of the commander—["What vessel?"—The *Victoria*.]

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think any question about the *Victoria* arises on this Vote.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: Not by the incompetence of the Commander.

*MR. BYLES: Then by his competence. The vessel went to the bottom, at any rate.

*MR. CREMER asked which Vote they were discussing—that for men, or that for money?

*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterbrough): As a matter of order, cannot we on either Vote discuss every question in connection with the Navy?

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly not. The rule of the House is that the general discussion takes place on the first Vote. Sometimes the two Votes are discussed together. The reason this Amendment is permissible is that Vote 1 applies to the men of the Navy, and it is not in Order to discuss a matter which is not a subject of the Vote.

*MR. CREMER: Is it men or money we are discussing?

THE CHAIRMAN: The money for the men.

*MR. BYLES thought nothing could be more germane to the subject in hand than the quotations he had made on the increase of naval expenditure by an eminent and brilliant Chancellor of the Exchequer, who further said—

> "If the foreign policy of this country is conducted with skill and judgment, the present large and increasing armaments are quite unnecessary, and the taxation they involve perfectly unjustifiable."

Very little consideration had been given to the people who had to bear this increase of taxation, to be imposed at the very time when a Committee was considering the destitution that arose from non-employment. With regard to the alternative policy, he believed that there was a more excellent way, and it was for the nations to consider together whether mutual, reciprocal, and perhaps, proportional disarmament could not be brought about among the great powers of Europe. There had been evidence during the last six or twelve months, that there was more preparedness than was generally supposed, amongst the statesmen of Europe for such proposals. He looked forward with hope to the day when a statesman would arise who would seek, by diplomatic means, to avoid the necessity for increasing naval and military expenditure.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, the quotation the hon. Member (Mr. Byles) had just made from a speech by the late Lord Randolph Churchill, should be read in conjunction with other speeches by the noble Lord, who was a brilliant and effective Leader of his Party. He was perfectly sure that many quotations would be found to the effect that England must possess an overwhelming Navy. He was convinced that no leading Conservative Statesman used more emphatic language in that direction than the late Lord Randolph Churchill. The hon. Member for Haggerston had commented on what he considered the change of attitude of the present Government in respect to Naval expenditure. No doubt the Government would give a good reply to those comments. Of course they could mention, among other things, the increased armaments of France, and the growing understanding between France and Russia. But, without dwelling on these reasons, he ventured to give one reason very much to the point; the marked expression of public opinion in almost all classes of the British people in respect to the strength of the Navy, and to bearing the fiscal burdens necessary to maintain that strength. Most unmistakable had been the manifestations of that public opinion which must be the ultimate arbiter in all Parliamentary affairs.

*Mr. CREMER: Will the hon. Baronet say where evidence of that is to be found?

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE said, the evidence was to be found in almost every organ of almost every Party, and in the great number of public meetings which were held at the end of 1893, and more especially that held by the London Chamber of Commerce—about the most representative commercial body in the Kingdom.

*Mr. CREMER: That was the only meeting held.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE asserted the manifestations of public opinion had been unmistakable, and that those who knew the temperament and disposition of their countrymen—not the "Little England" and "Peace-at-any-price" parties, who were limited in number—but all who understood the feelings of Englishmen and Scotchmen, would say that the general opinion was that our Navy must be strong, and the people were willing to bear the burden of strengthening it. Whether that portion of the burden was great which fell upon the working classes was matter for discussion at another time. The burden would be great upon the upper classes, especially since the passing of the Revenue Act of last year, but that the burden of the Naval expenditure was heavy on the mass of the people seemed to him a monstrous proposition. Surely we must be powerful, and we were among the most lightly-taxed people on the face of the earth. But let that pass. The hon. Member asked why were there no public meetings in favour of this increased Naval expenditure. Why should there be such meetings when public opinion was satisfied with these proposals of Her Majesty's Government? Nobody was opposed to them except a limited class to which the hon. Member belonged. The vast mass of the people were with the majority in the House, and there was no necessity for public meetings. He hoped the hon. Baronet would divide on his Motion, for there was nothing like a Division to test the littleness of the "Little England" Party. Then would be seen how few Members would vote against the Government. He earnestly hoped the Civil Lord, who had conducted these Debates with so much ability and success, would not be deterred by the opinion of this small minority—Radicals though they were. But there were Radicals and Radicals; there were some, no doubt, who desired to minimise the importance of the British Empire, and among other means to their object would see the Naval expenditure reduced; but, on the other hand, there were sturdy, strong-minded, patriotic Radicals, who, though they differed on domestic policy, were little, if at all, behind the Conservative Party in desire to maintain the defence of the Empire. He was thankful for that, and he recognised it in some of the speeches delivered by Radical Members. He need not reiterate the assurance that the Government, in doing its duty, would receive the most loyal support from Members on his side of the House. The main reason why he interposed was that he understood the hon. Member for Northampton had recommended that we should abandon the Mediterranean. That he understood was the proposition, for he had had the advantage of hearing the speech of the right hon. Baronet (Sir C. Dilke), and was glad to hear it, especially after hearing some utterances about the Mediterranean on former occasions which did cause him some slight alarm. He was glad the right hon. Baronet had spoken out, declaring that the Mediterranean must be maintained, for that was the outcome of his argument. In addition to the claims of our great traffic in that inland sea, and of loyalty to our allies, Austria and Italy, there was the argument of the necessity of preserving our prestige in eastern countries. The recommendation of the hon. Member for Northampton would mean the turning of the Mediterranean into a French lake, admitting Russia through the Black Sea and Dardanelles to a comfortable coaling station on the eastern section, the western and middle sections being entirely French. In such a position we must abandon all command of Egypt and the Suez Canal, for that would be impossible without at least a joint command of the Mediterranean. That was so obvious a proposition that he would not stop to debate it. What he was most anxious to submit to the House was this: The abandonment of the Mediterranean would be a serious blow, he might almost say a deadly blow at our prestige throughout Asia. The Asiatic people were becoming more and more alive to what was going on in Europe by means of the increased intercommunication, and we must regard the effect of an abandonment of the Mediterranean on our prestige throughout Syria, Asia Minor, Arabia, and India. Important was that in India where the people had knowledge of our position in the Mediterranean. We had sent an expedition from Bombay to Malta, and he had the organising of this expedition. Thousands of natives of India of influence and intelligence took part in that expedition, and they, returning, had much to say to their countrymen about the Mediterranean, and so the people of India had become aware of what went on in the Mediterranean, and any sympton on our part of caving in, backing out, or scuttling, would create the impression that twelve o'clock had struck for England's greatness, and her great day of empire was approaching an inglorious sunset. It would be construed into a sign of decadence, and our prestige would suffer. Our vast dominion in Asia depended more upon opinion than upon physical force, though, of course, physical force was the basis. But the superstructure depended on opinion or prestige, and that meant the moral effect arising from these considerations. A more deadly blow could not be struck against England's moral dominion over Asiatic people than by the abandonment of the Mediterranean. To ask England to strike that blow herself with suicidal hand was to suppose us capable of more folly than we could be guilty of at the close of the nineteenth century. If we are to maintain the Mediterranean we must look at Gibraltar, but that was a question he would not now touch, for another opportunity would be presented for discussing the work there. In passing, however, he might say that if we are to maintain our hold, as the right hon. Baronet (Sir Charles Dilke) so well argued we must on the Mediterranean, then we must have at Gibraltar the means of repairing two big ironclads, should they be temporarily disabled. This money was required for an increased number of men necessary, because of the increase in ships; it was the development of Naval resources the country demanded, and he need not labour the point.

*Mr. A. C. MORTON said that he was not in favour of peace at any price, but in favour of defending the country in every way that was right and proper. Allusion had been made to the late Lord R. Churchill, and he believed that that statesman was in favour of a peace policy. At any rate, he opposed strongly that wretched fighting policy of ours in Egypt. The hon. Baronet who spoke last had said something abont the temper and disposition of the people. Well, the industrial classes—the substantial section of the people—who had made this country what it was, were all opposed to this war policy. He supposed that the hon. Member got his notions from the public-houses. Whether he got them firsthand or second hand was a point on which they had no information. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty said that they ought to have raised this discussion on the Vote for men, or on the Army Votes. But last week they were appealed to—some of them personally—to allow the Army Votes to go through. It was going too far when Members of the Government appealed to hon. Members as a matter of business and urgency to allow Votes to go through, and afterwards twitted them for their acquiescence. If that was the way business was going to be conducted the Civil Lord and the War Minister might encounter difficulties in getting their Votes through on future occasions. He hoped they would not be treated again as the Civil Lord had treated them that night. The Civil Lord had said that no one protested against the Vote for the increase of the Navy last year. The hon. Member was wrong, for he protested against it. But, because an increase was Voted last year, the Government had no right to say that the House was bound to go on increasing the Vote for ever. Then the Civil Lord said that those who objected to an increase of taxation ought to vote against the increased demands for education. Now, those who always voted, and always had voted, when they dared, against the education Vote were the Jingo Members opposite, who were, however, ever ready to grant money for war purposes. Those who, like himself, had always voted in support of education for the children of all classes, did not like to be told that because they were in favour of devoting still more money to educational purposes, they must, therefore, vote for an increase of the Army and Navy. The policy of the Amendment was that in future there should be arbitration instead of war. Two years ago there was a Debate on the subject, and he wanted to hear what the Government had done in consequence of that Debate. Were they prepared to make a Treaty with the American Government, providing that disputed questions should be submitted to arbitration before war was begun? Had the Government approached the French, German, Russian, and other Governments with a view to entering into Arbitration Treaties? Unless steps were taken to carry out Resolutions passed by that House, it was a farce to pass them. He was convinced that if Arbitration Treaties were made there would practically be no danger of war in the future, for during the time taken to consider the question, disputing countries would have time in which to arrive at a calmer frame of mind. Surely the Radical Party ought to remember the promises which they had made to the people of this country. Possibly one of the reasons why they were losing seats in the country was that they were forgetting their pledges. The Tory Party had apparently nobbled this so-called Radical Government in regard to this Jingo business. They ought to have some respect for their principles, and to remember the promises which they made when in Opposition. Although it might be only a small band that would vote in support of the Amendment that night, the Members who composed it would have the satisfaction of knowing that they were voting in accordance with the policy which their Party advocated before they were returned to power. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy seemed to think that whatever the Government did must be right, and therefore, whilst he sympathised with the hon. Baronet the Member for the Cockermouth Division, he intended to vote with the Government. That was not the way in which the representatives of the people ought to view the Government's management of business. Why should not we endeavour to cultivate good relations with the French, the Germans, the Russians, and any other peoples we had to do business with? Unfortunately, there was a party in this country who lived by war. They were brought up for fighting purposes, and for nothing else. They said it was the only trade or profession that a gentleman could be connected with; he believed that, except in the case of those at the top of the tree, they fought very well when called upon to do so, and that they were brave men. [An hon. MEMBER: "The Duke of Cambridge."] A right hon. Gentleman said the Duke of Cambridge. For several years he had desired to reduce the Duke of Cambridge's salary out of the way altogether, and he should propose that reduction on another Vote. He objected to fighting people altogether. [*A Laugh.*] Hon. Gentlemen who laughed should remember that war was, after all, murder. If they read their Bible—as he supposed they did sometimes—they would know that was the Bible view of it. We were told, "Thou shalt not commit murder." Some persons would strike the "not" out altogether. Unfortunately, a Radical Government were always got hold of by somebody. He understood from what he had heard to-night there was a division in the Cabinet in regard to these Jingo matters. He understood from experts that there was a leakage of at least £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 of money on each service absolutely wasted; and he was told a great saving might be made by proper management without any loss of efficiency whatsoever, because things were not conducted in a business-like way. The right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean rather sneered at some of them for having made windy speeches. That sort of sneer was directed at everyone who tried to do a little good in the world, but it proved nothing. In regard to this increased expenditure, they had been told something about the Colonies. He knew the Australians paid something towards the cost of the Navy, and that Canada did not. Why? Because Canada would have nothing to do with our foreign war policy. If they wanted Canada to join us, the fighting policy must be given up altogether. Why should Canada trouble about our war policy? Canada had not to thank this country for anything at all. Canada was made by people who were driven out of this country by bad land laws and religious persecution. They did not want our protection at all, and if it came to that——

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER): I must call the hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that he is getting rather away from the Vote. He appears now to be discussing Colonial policy.

*MR. A. C. MORTON went on to say that if it had not been for the "Little England" policy—the policy of Home Rule—we should not have had a Colony left us at the present time worth having. He had been telling hon. Members some wholesome truths they did not like. He could tell them a good many more; but he wanted to know one thing—Who was going to pay for this increased expenditure? The working classes of this country paid, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer would admit, the bulk of the Imperial taxes. He had no doubt they would try and put something more on the working classes. They had no right to be extravagant with the money of the taxpayers of this country. He did not believe that either economy or efficiency was studied in the management of the Navy. But there was a higher principle still. We professed to be a Christian country, although, he supposed, we were the greatest murderers in all the world. We had got an Established Church with Archbishops, Bishops——

THE CHAIRMAN (MR. J. W. LOWTHER): Order, order! I must call the hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that he is getting very far away from the Estimate now under discussion, and I must ask him to confine himself more closely to the subject-matter of the Vote, and warn him to be careful.

*MR. A. C. MORTON, in conclusion, had only to say that we professed to be a Christian people, and that we ought to remember our profession, and go in, not for increased expenditure, but for arbitration and peace.

*ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) regretted that the Debate had been initiated at all. He would have liked it to go abroad that the House of Commons was unanimous in voting the necessary supplies to maintain our Naval power. He did not take the hon. Member who had just spoken very seriously, but he agreed with his remark that windy speeches did not prove anything.

MR. A. C. MORTON: I did not say that.

*ADMIRAL FIELD said, he would call the hon. Member's speech a windy speech, which did not prove anything. The hon. Member gloried in the accusation that he belonged to the Little England Party. but he would say that the hon. Member belonged rather to the Party of Icelanders. He would recommend the hon. Gentleman to read the Prime Minister's speech at Sheffield. [MR. A. C. MORTON: "I have read it."] Then he had not profited by it. The hon. Member said he must have regard for his principles. What were they? [MR. A. C. MORTON: "Arbitration."] He would not argue that question. The hon. Member who moved the Amendment did not tell the Committee the ground on which he challenged the Vote. It was true this expenditure was for defence, but the best kind of defence was to be prepared for offence. No Government would involve us in war willingly, but the Government he would hang would be that which allowed the country to drift, and its Naval armaments to get into such a deplorable condition as that in which we were placed in 1882. Naval officers were patriotic men, who could have no object but to see their country safe, and he thought they ought to be commended rather than blamed for having done their best to arouse public opinion and to secure that both the late Government and the present did their duty in this matter. If there was any class in this country interested in the maintenance of our sea power it was the working men, for they would suffer most by a miserable cheeseparing policy. If we lost the command of the sea, what was to become of our toiling millions? If the raw material could not come into this country wages could not be earned, and the people must starve. The problem was quite different nowadays to what it was when England was self-sustaining. "Bloated armaments" was a figure of speech without any meaning, unless it was defined. He understood it to mean armaments in excess of the necessities of the country. But no one seriously considered that our armaments were in excess of our Imperial needs. Trade followed the flag, but only so long as it was known that there was a power behind the flag to make it respected in all parts of the world. Prince Bismarck said moral strength must rest upon material force, and in our case the material force was naval. He had listened with interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Northampton; but he could not take him seriously. The hon. Member had stated to him personally that he was in favour of a strong Navy and would vote anything that was necessary, but that he would take the money away from the Army Vote.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I am in favour of what I call a strong Navy, which is what the Navy was 12 years ago.

*ADMIRAL FIELD said he would pin the hon. Member to his words. He would answer the hon. Member that the Navy of 10 or 12 years ago was a weak Navy, and to say that the Navy at that time was strong was really absurd. He had always looked upon the hon. Member as a friend of the Navy. It was not, however, possible to contemplate the transfer of our commerce to neutral flags; the neutrals had not ships enough. We had £150,000,000 worth of commercial property on the high seas every night, and to contemplate the transfer of all that commerce to a foreign flag was a paltry policy unworthy of a statesman or a Member of the House of Commons. Another hon. Member suggested that this country should increase her armaments if war broke out; but ships did not descend from the clouds ready made. If war broke out, moreover, it would be short, sharp, and decisive, and woe be to us if we were caught napping! The increase in the Navy Vote in excess of the Army Vote was partly due to the transfer of the Naval gun Vote from the Army to the Navy Estimates. He was sorry that the Government had not seen their way to propose a large increase in the Royal Marines, the cheapest force in the country. The hon. Member for the Middleton Division seemed to wish that a portion of the increase in the Navy Vote should be spent on education, but he would remind the hon. Member that it was better to be ignorant and safe than to be educated and in danger. This was not a Party, but a National question, and the Vote ought not to be subjected to carping criticism, but should be passed unanimously. The country had an object-lesson to-day on the advantage of possessing a command of the seas in the victories of Japan over China. If this country were to lose command of the seas, India and our Colonies would be gone. There was no bottom in this agitation. No man worthy of the name of a patriot would indulge in it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I would venture to ask the Committee to vote now upon the particular Amendment before us. We have a great deal yet to do in Supply, and the Committee of Supply must be closed to-morrow. [Several hon. MEMBERS: "Why?"] Because the Report of Supply must be taken on Thursday. I will not re-state again all that I said in reply to a question the other day. I then stated that the 21st inst. was the latest day upon which it would be possible to take the First Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill, and I am afraid that, in order to make it safe that we may have Supply finished to-morrow night, I must give notice that I shall to-morrow move to suspend the 12 o'clock Rule. Under the circumstances, I hope that the House will now vote upon the present movement.

Sir J. E. GORST (Cambridge University) said, he could not agreee with the right hon. Gentleman in the statement which he had now made—that it was necessary for the Report of Supply to be taken on Thursday. He ventured to say, with great deference to the right hon. Gentleman, that it would be ample time if the Report of Supply were taken on Friday, and after the First Reading of the Ways and Means Bill on Friday there would be ample time to complete the arrangements for the financial year by 1st April. He had been waiting there the whole evening with the view of saying a few words on this Estimate. In fact he had given notice to bring before the Committee the case of Lord Charles Beresford, and the refusal to grant the time he had served in Egypt. He had been informed that, having allowed the Vote for men to pass, he had lost his chance, and that on the Vote for the money, the same licence was not permitted. He, therefore, could only give notice that on a future occasion on the Vote for salaries he should fulfil his undertaking to bring the case before the Committee. As to the general discussion, he must congratulate the Member for Northampton on his audacity in bringing it forward as a reproach that the First Lord of the Admiralty did not sit in the House of Commons. That was a complaint which he had made on many occasions when he sat with Lord Randolph Churchill below the Gangway. It was now more than 20 years since his right hon. Friend the Member for St. George's was the Liberal First Lord of the Admiralty, and since that time their Liberal opponents had, whenever they were in power, placed their First Lord of the Admiralty in the House of Lords, where he was entirely withdrawn from the proper control which the House ought to exercise over a great spending Department. The Debate had scarcely been a Naval debate. It had been a Debate on the Defences of the country, and he must say that hon. Members opposite, who plumed themselves on being in an especial degree the representatives of the working classes, showed that in intelligence they were far behind the people they professed to represent. The working men of this country now knew well enough that their food depended on the maintenance of the supremacy of the seas, and they also knew that their industry depended upon it. Some statistics read by his noble Friend the Member for Middlesex (Lord G. Hamilton) last year showed to what extent raw materials were imported into England. What would the constituents of the hon. Member for Northampton say if there was any risk as to the importation of hides and leather, 83 per cent. of which came from abroad? The facts being so, and the intelligence of the working classes being far above what it was 30 or 40 years ago—knowing as they did that food and labour depended on the maintenance of supremacy at sea—he did not attach the slightest importance to these proposals in favour of "economy," or to denunciations of "bloated armaments." He thought those denunciations worse than useless. No one wanted to spend a single sixpence on the Army or Navy more than was necessary. If anyone could point out where a saving could be effected, he would earn the gratitude of the Committee and his constituents.

Mr. THOMAS SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood) said, a challenge had been thrown out to Members on the Government side of the House who opposed the continuous increase in the expenditure of the Navy to point out some specific way in which the reduction could be effected. He would answer that challenge. The late First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord G. Hamilton) received a pension of £2,000 a year, and he thought that this money might very easily be saved. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W, Lowther): The hon. Member is not entitled to discuss any matter except that which arises out of the Vote at the present time.

Sir J. E. GORST (Cambridge University): That is, besides, not in the Navy Estimates.

Mr. SNAPE continued by saying that one reason for their action was that if they did not protest when the leaders of their own side yielded to this clamour for increased expenditure, the ground would be taken from them if at any future time they had to protest against a similar increase when the Opposition were in power. The reason for objecting was this. Many hon. Members had pledged themselves to do their utmost to adhere to the old watchwords of the Liberal Party—"Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform." But instead of that policy they found that there was a continual increase of expenditure by the Government of their own side. They were told that it was absolutely necessary to have an overmastering Navy against the combined strength of two other Powers, but the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) had long ago told them that they occupied this position. Why, then, should we go on in this extravagant way, voting the money of those who were suffering severely from industrial and agricultural depression in the country? Owing to the skill of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, much of the taxation for the maintenance of these armaments would ultimately fall on the rich; but notwithstanding this, a considerable addition would necessarily be made to the taxation of the industrial classes and of the poor. If the Committee continued year after year to vote these increased sums, hon. Members were to that extent taking away from the Chancellor of the Exchequer the opportunity to provide a free breakfast table for the working classes of the country. He, therefore, supported the Mover of the Amendment.

Sir W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire) joined in the protest of his hon. Friend. His main reason for doing so was that he believed increasing armaments were unnecessary if that course of agreement was entered into with other nations for the purpose of reduction which had been recommended. He did not, moreover, like to see those millions of money voted away with a light heart when there were such grievous needs among the people he represented for the protection of their life and property. The only class now in this country trained to a seafaring life were the fishermen. He therefore wished to enter a claim for the money necessary to make proper harbours for those men. One ironclad would provide good fishery harbours for the whole coast of Scotland. This subject had been brought forward time after time during the last half-century. In one storm alone 100 fishermen were drowned, leaving behind them many widows and orphans. Sir Robert Duff, whose recent loss they all deplored, brought this question before the House 30 years ago; and therefore he felt that in urging measures to be taken to render those increasing armaments unnecessary he was doing his best to enable money to be provided for the purpose of building more and better harbours. A democratic Budget had been passed, and now they desired to see an era of democratic expenditure inaugurated.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.) supported the proposals of the Government. He was no Protectionist, because he knew that the best antidote against Protection was the existence of a strong fleet on the seas. England grew about 9,000,000 quarters of wheat. If the fleet were reduced, how could we ensure the passage over seas of the 22,000,000 quarters of wheat which were not grown in this country, but which were necessary to feed the people? In the event of war breaking out, even if it were successful, the 4lb. loaf would quickly go up to 8d., and, if the war were unsuccessful, the loaf would go up beyond 1s. In the face of these facts, how could it be contended that a strong Navy was in the interests of the squires and parsons? In the county which he represented, there were miles of land out of cultivation, and other land was falling out by parishes. The land did not grow the wheat which it ought to grow, and how was it possible to import what food was required unless the ocean lines from Argentina and the United States were kept clear?

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): Shall I be in order, Sir, if I enter a protest against the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to keep us here after 12 o'clock to-morrow?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. Lowther): No. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has not made any such proposal. He has only given notice that he will make a proposal to-morrow.

*__Mr. J. G. WEIR__ (Ross and Cromarty) said, that he should not support the Motion, because he thought that this country ought to have the finest ships, fitted with the finest guns and the best machinery in the world. He considered it of the first importance that our Navy should be maintained at the highest order of efficiency. Of course the expenditure was large, but he hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would find some way of raising the funds other than by imposing increased taxation on the working classes of the country. He should like some of the officers and men included in the Vote to do duty among the Western Islands of Scotland, in looking after those pests to fishermen, the steam trawlers. After much trouble and constant application, he succeeded in getting from the Admiralty one wretched old tub of a gunboat, which could only steam eight knots an hour. The fishermen on the South coast of England could have 19-knot cruisers to protect them——

The CHAIRMAN Mr. J. W. Lowther) : The remarks of the hon. Gentleman would come better on the Fishery Vote.

*Mr. WEIR said, that the Admiralty objected to the coastguard taking any part in looking after steam trawlers off the coasts of the Highlands and islands of Scotland, because they considered it was not dignified work for men engaged in the service. It was, however, singular that in the south of England the chief officers of the coastguard acted as fishery officers; they did so without any loss of dignity.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. Lowther) : The hon. Member is now dealing with a specific grievance. The object in moving the reduction was to deal with the general question of the Navy; and the hon. Member's remarks would be more applicable when the specific Vote which he challenges comes before the House.

*Mr. WEIR said, that he would content himself with asking why the *Northampton* was not sent round to the islands of Scotland. She was going round the coast of Ireland for boys, and he had urged, time after time, that she should be sent to Stornoway where the finest boys could be obtained.

Sir E. HARLAND (Belfast, N.) said, that before a Division was taken he would like to remind the Committee that in the discussion on Vote A several questions were put to the Civil Lord which had not yet been answered. For instance, questions were asked as to the size of the graving dock it was proposed to construct at Gibraltar, and as to the construction of second-class cruisers much broader and shorter than those of the Talbot class.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. Lowther) said, those questions would more properly come up on other Votes—the first on the Works Vote and the second on the Vote for *materiel.*

Sir E. HARLAND: May I ask when the answers will be given?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) said, he understood the Civil Lord, at an earlier stage of the discussion, promised an answer to the various questions put by the hon. Member for Dover, and by others. He did not at all press the hon. Gentleman to give an answer not allowed by the Rules of the House, but he would like to know when the replies would be given.

Mr. ROBERTSON said, the replies would be given when the Loans Bill was before the House, and as soon as the Vote 1 was taken the Resolution which would start the Loans Bill would be moved.

Mr. BALFOUR : Can questions be asked on that Bill?

Mr. ROBERTSON presumed they could.

Sir E. HARLAND said, it was a most exceptional course for a whole evening to be spent in asking questions, and then for the Civil Lord to give no answers to the questions.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) asked if the Chancellor of the Exchequer could give him an answer to the question as to the proceedings connected with arbitration.

Sir W. HARCOURT said, he could only repeat that the Government would do everything they could to promote the cause of arbitration. They had shown their sincerity in the matter by their action in respect to the Behring Sea question. Nothing had been wanting on the part of the Government to give effect to that arbitration. It was their desire that all questions of that kind should be settled by arbitration.

Mr. A. C. MORTON remarked, that what he had said had special reference to the making of a treaty with America.

Sir W. HARCOURT : We are very anxious to promote that, but I am not at liberty to state exactly how the matter stands.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing) said, the fact that questions put on Vote A had not been answered was due to an innovation which had crept into the practice of the Committee. The practice had hitherto been to allow the same discussion on the Vote for men as on the Vote for money, that was to say that the discussion permissible on the one was permissible on the other. The other night, after the satisfactory statement of the Civil Lord, the Committee assented to the Vote for men being taken. The Vote for money then stood as the first business to be taken in connection with the Naval Estimates. The understanding, of course, was that when the Vote for wages came up the same discussion would be permitted. That had always been the practice before. To night a different practice had prevailed. If the new practice were to continue it would not, he feared, facilitate the passing of the Vote for men.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER) said, they were now discussing an Amendment moved by the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth. It was quite possible that everything hon. Members desired to urge might be in order on the general Vote, bur at present the discussion must be restricted to the Amendment.

*MR. CREMER hoped that the course pursued that night in dividing the Vote would not be accepted as a precedent. Even the Chairman of Committees had made a mistake in saying they were discussing the Vote for men. For when a question was asked him afterwards he stated that the subject under discussion was Money, not Men. It was quite clear from the confusion which had reigned to-night that it would be awkward if the course pursued on the present occasion were pursued on other occasions.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 32; Noes 153.—(Division List No. 28.)

MR. H. E. KEARLEY (Devonport) said, that before the Vote was agreed to, he wished to raise two points. The first dealt with the long-standing question of opening up a new avenue of promotion for warrant officers. The claims of those men were supported by hon. Members without distinction of Party, and the noble Lord the Member for Ealing, who was First Lord of the Admiralty in the late Government, had declared in favour of the proposed concession. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty had said that the question had taken a new turn, and that it was engaging the serious consideration of the Admiralty. But that was practically what had been said last year. The Secretary of the Admiralty then stated that the question was engaging the attention of the Admiralty, and that he hoped that he would be able in a short time to make an announcement in reference to it, which would be regarded as satisfactory. There was another point, also, on which no satisfaction had been given by the Government. That was as to the claim of engine-room artificers for promotion to warrant rank. It was said that Members representing dockyard constituencies brought forward those questions because of the pressure that was brought to bear on them by their constituents. But that was not so. The claims of those men were supported by hon. Members from all parts of the country. He thought they were entitled to a further statement in regard to them, and, in order to obtain it, he moved the reduction of the Vote by a sum of £100.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, he thought the House had carried, as far as the public interest would allow it to go, a discussion on the claims for increased wages and promotion of men engaged in the Naval Service of the country. He did not complain of such questions being raised with regard to men employed in the dockyards, as that was a matter of mere civil administration; but when it came to men in the Naval Service, he must express a doubt as to whether the interests of the Service or the interests of the country were served by those discussions of alleged grievances. At any rate he found himself in the position of being unable to do more than to recapitulate his statement which had been found so unsatisfactory by his hon. Friend. The present status of the warrant officers was the subject of new consideration by the Admiralty, and, until it was concluded, questions as to the creation of a new rank, or as to more rapid promotion within their body, must be left in abeyance. That was really all he could say. As to the engine-room artificers, he had been in hopes that the hon. Member would have acquiesced in the suggestion he had made—that these men should come before them as they did last year, and, in company with hon. Members who were expert engineers, discuss the points as to which they were still unsatisfied. He was not in a position to announce any other decision on the question, or to do more than say that they should be glad to repeat the experiment they had made last year. He hoped therefore the hon. Member would not persevere in moving the reduction of the Vote.

Mr. KEARLEY said, he would gladly have acquiesced in the suggestion, were it not for the fact that they had had this performance gone through for the last two years, and had received the same assurance, but after allowing the Vote to go through they had never heard anything more about the matter. A deliberate statement had been made by the Secretary to the Admiralty in reply to a similar complaint, to the effect that a year ago the question was under the serious consideration of the Admiralty. In spite of that, however, they had never heard a word about it until now. With regard to the deputations that had been suggested, he had attended these deputations until he became weary of them. He had been before Lord Spencer on three different occasions, and had found that it was altogether profitless. He persevered, therefore, in moving the reduction of the Vote, because he felt that unless they showed their resentment of this unjust treatment, they would have no chance of obtaining redress.

Sir J. BAKER (Portsmouth), called the attention of the hon. Member to the great advantage which would accrue to the whole body of warrant officers by following the suggestion of the Civil Lord. He had proposed to review their position, and to improve, both in number and status, the whole body. The numbers of warrant officers would also be largely increased. There could be no possible advantage in dividing the House on the question of improvements, the responsibility for which rested on the Admiralty. He hoped the hon. Member would not press his Amendment, which would unquestionably retard the very work which he had undertaken.

Mr. W. ALLAN said, the position of the engine-room artificers was intensely unsatisfactory, and the remedy was practically very simple, so far as he could judge from the many letters he had received from these men. What the artificers wanted was that they should be allowed to pass the examination which was now in vogue for the probationary assistant engineers, in order to obtain engineer rank. The next point was that they wanted an increase in their pay, as their pay was miserably small. In fact, they were not paid what was paid in a common collier, and considering the difficulties attending their position, and the responsibilities attaching to their work on board a man-of-war, he thought their pay was utterly inadequate. He had hoped to see £20,000, or £30,000 included in the Estimates for an increase of pay to the artificers, and he hoped the Civil Lord would satisfy them on these two important points.

Mr. KEARLEY said, he would withdraw the Amendment on the understanding that this matter should not be allowed to hang over year after year, but that the Civil Lord would do what he could to obtain some decision on these important points.

MR. ROBERTSON replied that these were matters which were not under his control, but he would do his best to meet his hon. Friend's wishes.

MR. G. WYNDHAM (Dover) observed that on Monday last he was allowed to ask a question as to the proposed harbour works at Dover, and on Tuesday he made a speech putting forward the same point, when the Civil Lord bowed his head to him with great courtesy, and he understood the hon. Gentleman was going to reply on the subject. In addition three other definite points were raised by other hon. Members. In times past, it had been usual for the Government to reply to the general discussion, and he expected the same course would have been followed on this occasion, and that hon. Members would have obtained the preliminary information to which they were entitled before they came to the narrower issues raised by particular votes. It was customary after the general discussion, and before they came to the separate votes, that hon. Members should be informed what was to be the general policy of the Government in order that they might determine with their constituents what action they should take. They had been deprived of that privilege on this occasion, and instead of having a reply from the Civil Lord on the various points raised, the whole day had been wasted by antediluvian arguments which interested nobody except the last relics of the Manchester School.

MR. ROBERTSON observed that the hon. Member would not be under the smallest disadvantage, and the proceedings to which the discussion he desired to raise would be appropriate would commence the moment Vote 1 was passed. He should take care that the Bill should be put into the hands of hon. Members as speedily as possible, and if the hon. Member for Dover desired any further information beyond that contained in the schedule he should take care to get that information for him, and, if necessary, have it printed.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said, there was a large Vote for the men for the Naval Reserve, and he should like the Civil Lord to give them some information with regard to the value of the Vote.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER): If the hon. Member will turn to Vote 7 of the Navy Estimates, he will find that the pay for the Naval Reserve is taken under that Vote, and therefore, any questions he wishes to raise he must raise when Vote 7 is reached, and not before.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER intimated that when the Vote was reached he should point out that they might be reckoning without their host if they expected to get the whole of these men in time of war. He wished to call attention to the desirability of the utilisation of the services in the Navy of the non-professional seamen of this country. It was a matter of history that on every occasion when we had been engaged in maritime war, this country had relied on a source of strength denied to almost every other country in the world, and which we possessed in a prominent degree. There was no doubt whatever that we possessed more non-professional seamen not employed in the Royal Navy or the merchant service than any other nation could boast of, and it was an obvious gap that there should be no provision whatever for the employment of any of these men. The moment that war was declared, thousands of men connected with yachts and pleasure boats would be set free who were better acquainted with the sea than even the sailors of the Royal Navy. There was no case in our history when we had not been forced to rely on the non-professional aid of men who were not seamen. In

Elizabethan times our naval successes were won by our non-naval seamen. The suggestion for the utilisation of these non-professional seamen had been prejudiced by the failure of the naval volunteers. They had rightly been disbanded because bluejackets could do their work just as well. But there was work which could be done better by volunteers than by professional seamen. Bluejackets were not trained to any knowledge of territorial and pilotage waters round our coasts. These men might be utilised to man torpedo boats. We had no constituted crews for torpedo boats. These boats were laid up in the dockyards, and men were called away from sea-going complements and put into these boats, being taken away from ships in which they could be well employed. Allowing for the necessary outgoing on a liberal scale, the assistance of torpedo instructors, engine-room artificers, stores, and the cost of maintenance, £250 would be sufficient to supply a crew for a torpedo boat. The Admiralty had lately made liberal changes commended by common sense, and he asked them to make use of the resources to which he had alluded. Non-professional seamen round our coasts were to be numbered by tens of thousands, and they knew the sea as no sailor in the Royal Navy knew it. They went out in heavy weather and were successful competitors with fishermen in the navigation of our narrow channels. It might be said that these men were not amenable to naval discipline, but he had been told by many naval officers that there was a great deal to be said for the view that where men were in independent command, they took away the chief objection based on the absence of absolute control such as was necessary for a sea-going ship in the Navy. What was wanted in a torpedo boat was initiative and capability of performing dangerous actions outside the immediate scope of a fleet, and these were just the qualifications which, what he might call amateur seamen, were able to bring to the work which they had to perform. He asked the Civil Lord to inquire of his advisers whether there was not an opening for the utilisation of the services of these men, who would be available in time of war, when they could not carry on their own avocations.

Mr. A. B. FORWOOD (Liverpool, Ormskirk) said, the Committee had been placed at a disadvantage by the way in which questions had been raised on the Second Vote, which should rather have been raised on the First. He had put several questions on matters connected with the Royal Naval Reserve, the training of boys, and the cruise of the *Northampton*, to which he had received no reply; and there was another important question remaining to be dealt with—that referring to the designs of ships and the machinery for the vessels. He understood from the Civil Lord that the new vessels proposed to be laid down in this year's programme would not be commenced till the House had had an opportunity of discussing Vote 8. The Vote now under discussion provided about £4,000,000, and, according to his calculation, it would enable the Admiralty to go on for three months without coming to the House for another Vote. That would throw the discussion of these matters so late, that it would practically deprive the House of the opportunity of discussing them that it ought to have. He should like an assurance from the Chancellor of the Exchequer confirming what he had been led to believe that Vote 8 would be submitted early enough to give the House in Committee an opportunity of discussing these serious matters connected with the designs of the ships and their machinery before they were determined upon.

Sir W. HARCOURT said, he frankly admitted the fairness of the appeal made to him by the right hon. Gentleman, and he would see what could be done. It was his duty to press upon the House the necessity under which the Government were placed. When the Vote for the money was postponed the other night he certainly hoped and was led to understand that there would not be a protracted Debate on this Vote. The Government really were in very exigeant circumstances, but he would do his best to meet the views of the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. A. J. **BALFOUR** said, he could quite understand that the Government should be disappointed by the course of the Debate that night, but certainly the responsibility did not rest with the Opposition side of the House. Let it be understood that, if there had been a larger discussion than was anticipated by the Government, the persons who had taken part in it had not been for the most part those sitting on the Oppositiom Benches; but the proposed reductions and most of the speeches had come from their own side of the House. That should be put on record.

Mr. E. **ROBERTSON** said, he should not like a false impression to go abroad. The right hon. Gentleman had imputed to him rather a different statement from that which he made as to the new shipbuilding and the machinery, and he now asked for a pledge that a commencement would not be made until there had been a debate. What he said more than once was, that the details should be discussed on Vote 8, but he had not given the pledge which the right hon. Gentleman seemed to imagine he had given.

Mr. A. B. **FORWOOD** said, this was an important qualification. What was the use of putting before the Committee details of vessels to be built when the vessels were commenced? One of the most important matters in connection with the construction of ships was the fitting them with boilers; but if the vessels were laid down according to certain designs, then those designs could not be altered. There was, then, nothing to thank the Admiralty for in offering to put these designs on the Table when the Vote was reached. The Committee could offer no suggestion, for the Government could consider no other proposal. He mistook what the Civil Lord said before, and certainly thought the opportunity was to be given to the Committee. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would see his way to offering the desired opportunity. The Committee were asked to take a new departure in the mode of construction and equipment, and especially in regard to the boilers of the new cruisers, which then should have an opportunity of discussing before the actual commencement of the ships.

Sir E. **HARLAND** said, he could not but look on the reply of the Civil Lord as extremely unsatisfactory, and especially in reference to the second-class cruisers after the *Talbot* type. One of the reasons for the unsatisfactory nature of the boilers in these vessels was that the vessels were so short that safer and better tried boilers could not be put into them. The second-class cruisers were to be broader and shorter than the *Talbot*, and it was actually proposed, in the face of all the mischief that had been caused, to return to the old class of boilers. In the face of recent experience, it would be madness to build the second-class cruisers shorter than before, so that boilers of a safer, better tried kind could not be put in. He regarded this as a serious and most grave intention on the part of the Admiralty. The Committee would be told when the Vote came on that such progress had been made that there was no chance of alteration. The Civil Lord had taken careful notes of the discussion, but he had not answered the questions raised. He did not consider this a proper discussion of the Estimates. Another important matter he should like to refer to was in regard to the coaling of vessels at sea.

The **CHAIRMAN** (Mr. J. W. Mellor) he hon. Member is now discussing the Votes. I understood he was going to ask a question.

SIR E. HARLAND said, he would take this opportunity of reminding the hon. Gentleman of the question.

MR. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) asked,—Was it to be understood that the second-class cruisers would be put in hand before there was any opportunity of discussion, because there was an assurance given the other night that their value was to be taken from the performance of another ship of a similar type, and that would be altogether misleading.

MR. ROBERTSON said, he had not said that; he only explained that he had not gone so far as the right hon. Gentleman had supposed he had. He did not wish to close discussion.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) said, if the Committee could discuss nothing on this Vote but the actual purposes for which the Vote was asked, the result would be that the money would be used for general purposes upon which there had been no discussion. As he understood, the Admiralty would be entitled, when this vote of £4,000,000 was taken, to spend the money for general Naval purposes, so that the result of restricting the right of discussion would be that discussion would be forbidden on nine out of ten purposes for which the money would be used. This Vote differed from all other Votes, in that it was a very large sum taken at the beginning of the year which could not then be spent for the purpose for which it was taken, but was used for general purposes. With all respect to the Chairman's ruling, the result would be that the Committee would be asked to vote a sum of money without real discussion of the purposes for which it would be applied.

THE CHAIRMAN said, he had followed the ruling which had been invariably laid down

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON said, that, as there was a discussion desired of new designs which did not meet with general approval, perhaps the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give an assurance that an opportunity for that discussion should be given.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, he would endeavour to make some arrangement that should be fair, but he could not at the moment fix a date.

Question put; Vote agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1894-95.

£200,000 for personnel, materials, works, buildings, and repairs at home and abroad.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON asked for information with respect to the appropriation in aid of the Navy made by the Government of India. As he understood, a substantial sum out of this Vote was wanted to make good the deficiency in that appropriation. There was a dispute between the Admiralty and the India Office on the subject.

MR. ROBERTSON said that there had been a long standing dispute between the Admiralty and the Government of India as to the contribution that India ought to make. The Admiralty, in their transactions with the Government of India, were annually £57,000 short. The dispute was referred to arbitration, the Prime Minister being the arbitrator. His decision was in general terms, and the effect of it could not at present be stated in money. It was now the subject of communication between India and the Admiralty. He could not say whether the whole of this sum of £57,000 would be paid by India in the future, but certainly a larger amount than had hitherto been paid would be paid.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) asked what was the point referred to the arbitrator.

MR. ROBERTSON explained that the arbitrator was asked to determine what was meant by the expression "Vessels for Indian Purposes." He had put an interpretation upon the words "Indian Purposes," but the application of the interpretation was still the subject of correspondence between the Admiralty and the Government of India.

Vote agreed to; and Progress Reported.

SUPPLY—REPORT [15*th March*].

Resolutions agreed to.

ARMY ANNUAL BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Bill to provide during Twelve Months for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army.

Bill presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time this day, and to be printed. [Bill 171.]

NAVAL WORKS (CONSOLIDATED FUND).

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to make provision for the construction of works and acquisition of land in the United Kingdom, and in certain Colonies, for the purposes of the Royal Navy, and to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums not exceeding in the whole £1,000,000 for such purposes.

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the Treasury to borrow, for the purpose of providing money for sums to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund, or for the repayment of sums so issued, by means of terminable annuities, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for Naval Services; and, if those moneys are insufficient, out of the Consolidated Fund.—(*Sir W. Harcourt.*)

POOR LAW OFFICERS SUPERANNUATION BILL.

*MR. WALTER LONG (Liverpool, West Derby), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, explained that under the law as it now stood Poor Law officials were entitled equitably to a pension which in the majority of cases they received, but occasionally Boards of Guardians exercised the right which they possessed to decline to recognise the services of the officer. This Bill proposed to give a statutory right of pension to Poor Law officers. It was provided, however, that the Poor Law Officials should make a contribution similar to that made under the Civil Service Pension Fund, to vary according to the number of years' service. The question had been brought to his notice while at the Local Government Board, as it had also been before the notice of many of his predecessors; and he believed this Bill contained a compromise which could be accepted by the House. If the Bill was passed into law he believed it would remove what had been for more than 20 years a very vexed question; and he was confident that the House would do well to accept it.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) said, that on behalf of the Government he had no hesitation in supporting the Second Reading of the Bill. It would require a good deal of consideration in Committee; but, so far as he could understand, its general principle was not unfair to the public.

MR. J. W. LOGAN (Leicestershire, Harborough) objected.

MR. J. A. PEASE, MR. WARNER and Captain NORTON appealed to the hon. Gentleman to withdraw his objection; but he persisted, and the Debate accordingly stood adjourned.

SIR JOHN CASS'S CHARITY.

*SIR ANDREW R. SCOBLE (Hackney, Central), in rising to move—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to be graciously pleased to withhold Her consent from the Scheme now before Parliament for the management of the foundation known as Sir John Cass's Charity in the parish of Aldgate, &c."—

explained that Sir John Cass was an Alderman of London, who flourished about 200 years ago, and was Alderman for the Ward of Portsoken. In 1709 he made a will, by which he established two schools; first, the one he had already set up in Aldgate, which was an elementary school, and secondly, a more advanced school, to be built upon land which he possessed in Hackney, and which was to form a sort of extension of the Aldgate school, and was to be for the benefit of the same children. In 1718 he intended to make another will, but he died, after executing only two sheets of that document. There being, consequently, some difficulty in carrying out his intentions with regard to the schools, an attempt was made to obtain an Act of Parliament, but it only passed the House of Lords, and failed to pass the House of Commons. Some years after, in 1743, the matter was brought before the Court of Chancery, and Lord Hardwicke made a decree establishing the first will; but, as it appeared that the testator's freehold estate, which, on inquiry by the Chief Clerk was found to be worth £160 2s. 10d. per annum, was not sufficient to provide for both schools, the Court directed that the income should be devoted to the school in Aldgate. No attempt was made for about 100 years to establish the school in Hackney, but in 1842 the trustees of the Charity brought forward a scheme by which they proposed to spend £10,000 in building the school in Hackney, setting apart at the same time an amount of money for the maintenance of that school. Opposition was, however, offered to that scheme and it was dropped. In 1873 the matter was brought to the attention of the Endowed Schools Commissioners, who proposed a scheme for building upon the founder's estate in Hackney. That scheme also was not proceeded with. Then came the scheme now before the House. The Vestry of Hackney were quite willing and desirous that no attempt should be made to interfere with the school at Aldgate, and to that portion of the scheme no objection was taken. What they did object to was the further proposal of the Charity Commissioners, whereby, instead of spending money available for a school in Hackney, they proposed to spend a very large sum, not so much in the education of children, which was what the testator had in view, but in the establishment of a technical institute in the parish of Aldgate, not for children, but for adults of both sexes. He thought it would be abundantly clear that the intention of the testator was to establish a school in Hackney. It was also perfectly clear, that if such a school was established, it would enure to the benefit of the children of the district; therefore he contended that the best way to carry out the object of the testator was to benefit the children of Hackney as well as the children of Aldgate. At the time of the appeal to the Court of Chancery the annual income available was only £160, but it was now £6,000 a year, the bulk of it coming from Hackney; and he thought he was justified in saying that it was only fair, in dealing with the matter after such a lapse of time, that regard should be had to the needs of the locality from which the funds were derived. What he particularly wished to bring to the notice of the House in regard to the scheme of the Charity Commissioners was this, that not only was there no provision at all in the will of the testator for any such institute as was now contemplated, but it would be an absolute waste of funds if such an institute were established in Aldgate. Aldgate was the next parish to Whitechapel, where there was already a Technical Institute and school perfectly available for any Aldgate boy who wished to go there. On the northern side, in Finsbury, was an admirable Technical Institute established by the City Guilds of London. And in regard to the scheme for a library, which was one of the features proposed, in the next parish, Bishopgate, there had recently been established by the efforts of the Rev. W. Rogers, an admirable library. Therefore, he submitted, the scheme was unfair as regarded Hackney and unnecessary as regarded Aldgate.

He only asked that the intentions of Sir John Cass should be carried out, so far as the school at Hackney was concerned, and that the school might be made available now as 200 years ago for the children of Aldgate, by the establishment of foundation scholarships or in any other way that the ingenuity of the Charity Commissioners might devise. Aldgate was at the time of Sir J. Cass's death a part of the City of London, destitute of educational advantages. Hackney was a suburb not built upon, consisting mainly of arable land. There were now more persons living upon the Cass estate in Hackney than there were in the whole parish of Aldgate. If they took the Census Returns, it appeared that the population of the parish of Aldgate now amounted to only some 6,000 persons.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The population to which the scheme applies is 9,000 or 10,000. It is not for Aldgate only, in any sense.

*SIR A. SCOBLE said, that, even taking the right hon. Gentleman's figures, it remained that there were 10,000 people in that part of Hackney alone, which consisted of the Cass estate, while in the whole of Hackney there were 200,000 people. The 10,000 in Aldgate had many opportunities of obtaining this education, but in Hackney there was no institution of the kind; nothing more than an elementary school. It was the duty of hon. Members, as guardians of the public interest, to see that, in a matter of this kind, the best advantage was taken of such a benefaction, which, after being long in abeyance, was to be made fruitful. If the scheme of the Charity Commissioners, as it stood, were adopted, it would be of very little use, and a positive disadvantage to the kindred institutions in the neighbourhood. If, on the other hand, the benefit were extended to Hackney in the way the founder intended, and as the circumstances of the time required, it would be fruitful of much good, and would supply a want which had been severely felt in one of the poorest districts of London. He begged to move.

MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) seconded the Motion. With regard to Aldgate, the hon. Member had forgotten to mention another institution in that neighbourhood—the Bishopsgate Institute. Aldgate was now surrounded by such institutions, while Hackney was almost totally destitute of them. In the one case there was a diminishing population, and in the other a constantly increasing population. The Hackney people felt that they had an interest in this matter, and their claim seemed irresistible. It was proposed to hand over to Hackney a sum of £5,000, and what could Hackney do with such a nest-egg? It could start nothing, and if it did start anything, it could complete nothing. The cost of building this institution would be £100,000. When a scheme of this kind was devised for dealing with charitable funds, all those who felt they had an interest ought to be considered, and especially when the fund was to be made available for general public purposes. He did not know what position the Government would take, and did not wish to go into the question at length. This was a new scheme, appropriating money to a new purpose, and, in fact, the claims of Hackney had been recognised to the extent of £5,000, and this showed recognition of the principle he advocated. Hackney had a claim to some portion of the money. Then there was the fact brought forward by the hon. Member that the inhabitants of Hackney were the persons living on the estate furnishing the means for building up this institution, and they ought to be considered. In a few years, if matters proceeded as now, Aldgate would be almost denuded of resident population, and those who did remain there would have a variety of institutions to which they could go, while Hackney would be absolutely without them. He seconded the Motion.

MR. A. H. D. ACLAND said, he did not propose to go into the question how this money, which belonged to the parish of Aldgate, might or might not be spent, and no doubt there were many ways other than in the manner proposed by the scheme. There could be no doubt that the proposed technical institute would be of real value. The population of Aldgate was something between 9,000 and 10,000, and unless the House was prepared to throw over the will of the pious founder altogether—and the tendency had been in the other direction—he did not think the House could reject this scheme. The whole thing turned upon the will of the founder. True the founder left two wills, but it did not matter which was taken, neither the one nor the other left the money to Hackney. In his lifetime the donor founded an elementary school in Aldgate, and in his first will the founder provided for a schoolmaster and 20 poor boys to be selected from the school in Aldgate. Clearly it was for higher education for Aldgate. The second will said nothing of the secondary school, but it said nothing of allotting the money to Hackney. So far as the judgment of Lord Hardwicke went, it confirmed the second will. In no case was a bequest made to Hackney. The trustees, rightly thinking that the fund was too large for an elementary school, proposed, with the concurrence of the Charity Commissioners, to devote part of the money to a technical institute in Aldgate. If they once recognised the fact that in every place where a charitable endowment existed there a school must be placed, they would upset deans, chapters, and colleges in a most extraordinary manner. The Charity Commissioners, recognising that Hackney might have some claim, provided that a residue not exceeding £500 a year should be given to it for educational purposes. When the scheme came before the Education Department he had interviews with the Governors of the Aldgate cheme and the representatives of Aldgate, and they contended that the scheme unjustly deprived them of advantages and gave them to Hackney. On the other hand, the representatives of Hackney contended that they did not receive enough. In all these schemes a compromise had to be arrived at, and, though Hackney had no legal claim whatever, it was only reasonable to see whether something more could be done for it. Consequently, two additions were made for Hackney—£5,000 if it wished to build a technical institute or a polytechnic; and secondly, besides £500 a year, when the income from the endowment largely exceeded the amount required for the purposes of the Aldgate Scheme, the excess should be applied for a further scheme in which regard should be had to the educational interests of Hackney. What he had meant to say was this, that Hackney had no legal claim at all, and they could not have gone further without justly and fairly annoying the Aldgate people, where, as he had stated, there was a population of over 10,000. On the last occasion when a scheme was before the House, hon. Members rejected it because the views of the pious founder were not properly observed, and because there was too much alienation. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Address now contended that there was not alienation enough; but he hoped the House was not going to reverse the view it took on the previous occasion and insist that Aldgate must give still more, for that would only wreck the scheme and prevent any proposals on behalf of Hackney from being brought forward for many years to come.

The House divided—Ayes 15; Noes 83.—(Division List No. 29.)

House adjourned at Fifteen minutes before One o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 19th March 1895.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

***The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES** (The Marquess of Ripon), in moving the Second reading of this Bill, said it was a measure which was not likely to meet with any opposition, because the object of it was to relieve the Australian Colonies of certain disabilities which they laboured under, and which did not apply to other Colonies of the Crown. By the Act for the Better Government of Her Majesty's Australian Colonies passed in 1850, those Colonies were restrained from making any fiscal arrangements with any other Colony whatever which involved differential treatment of any kind, and that restriction applied not only to the Australian Colonies *en bloc*, but to each separate Colony, so that one Colony could not make any such arrangement with another. The Colonies after a time sought to be relieved from those disabilities, especially as regarded their arrangements amongst themselves within the limits of Australia, and Parliament saw fit in 1873 to pass a Bill enabling them to make such arrangements between themselves and with the Colony of New Zealand, but not with any other Colony. That, of course, removed to a certain extent the disabilities of this nature under which the Australian Colonies lay, but it still left them subject to a certain degree of disability, because although Victoria could make such an arrangement with New South Wales, neither New South Wales nor Victoria could do so with Canada or the Cape, which latter Colonies, however, were able to enter into such arrangements between themselves or any other Colony except the Australian Colonies. The Colony of New Zealand was thus left in a very peculiar position —namely, that she was the only one of Her Majesty's Colonies which could make an arrangement of the kind referred to with any other Colony whatsoever, because, though not an Australian Colony, she was allowed to make fiscal arrangements with the Colonies of Australia or with Canada or the Cape. At the conference last year at Ottawa, at which his noble Friend opposite (the Earl of Jersey) represented Her Majesty's Government — and he was glad to have that opportunity of expressing the thanks of the Government to his noble Friend for the able manner in which he discharged his important duties at that Conference—this particular matter engaged the attention and enlisted the interest of the members, and a resolution was passed by the Conference asking that the Australian Colonies might be relieved of the disability in question. When the Government came to consider the able Report of his noble Friend, this question naturally came very prominently under their attention, and neither he as Secretary of State for the Colonies nor his colleagues in the Government could see that any justification existed for leaving the Australian Colonies under a disability which did not apply to other Colonies of the Crown. Consequently the Government came to the conclusion that it would be only right to meet the views of the Conference, to abolish the disability, and to allow all the Colonies equally to make fiscal arrangements among themselves, though not to make such arrangements with the United Kingdom, because in that case considerations and obligations of treaties with foreign countries would enter into the matter. The whole and sole object of the measure, therefore, was to give to the Australian Colonies at their urgent request relief from the disability he had explained. His Lordship concluded by moving the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion agreed to.

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND)—No. 2—BILL.

***Lord MORRIS**, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said it was a very short one, and had already passed the House of Commons. Its object was to amend the blot which had recently been discovered in an Act of Parliament which had been in existence since 1836. The 6th and 7th William IV. regulated the Grand Jury system of Ireland so far as regarded civil purposes, and no doubt all their Lordships who were cognisant with Irish matters knew that the maintenance of roads in Ireland was a matter which had to go before Presentment Sessions in the first instance, then to the following Assizes before the Grand Jury, and then before the judge on circuit, who gave his *fiat.* Upon receiving that *fiat* it became a judgment, and could only be challenged in the ordinary way of challenging a judgment—namely, by an application to the Queen's Bench. Since the passing of the Grand Jury Act of 1836 the keeping of the roads in repair had been by contract for periods generally of five or seven years, the work being under the supervision of the County Surveyor. At the last Summer Assizes in the County of Londonderry a difficulty occurred that rendered apparent the blot in the Act which this Bill sought to remove. The Assizes in Ireland, as many of their Lordships were no doubt aware, were held twice a year, but practically there was an interval of eight months between the Summer and Spring Assizes, and only four months between those of the spring and summer. In the longer period considerable inconvenience would be suffered at times by the road contractor through payment for the work done having to stand over until the next Assizes, and the object of the Bill was to remedy that defect, and to expedite payment of the contractor's bills for work he had done, and which the County Surveyor's certificate showed had been duly executed in accordance with the contract.

Lord RIBBLESDALE said, the Irish Government had no objections to the provisions of this Bill, which would obliterate the blot of which the noble Lord had complained, and remedy the existing inconvenience.

Lord ASHBOURNE said, it was obvious that the Bill removed a defect in the Grand Jury Act. He had received a communication requesting him to move an amendment to remove another blot in the Act of 1836, and he should take an opportunity of doing so during the Committee stage of the Bill.

Bill read 2ª.

STANNARIES BILL. [H.L.]

A Bill for abolishing the Court of the Vice-Warden of the Stannaries—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1ª; and to be printed. [No. 43.]

Lord Morris.

EVIDENCE IN CRIMINAL CASES (NO. 2) BILL. [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Law of Evidence—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday next. [No. 44.]

House adjourned at a Quarter before
Six o'clock, to Thursday next,
a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 19th March, 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

BRAY, DALKEY, KINGSTOWN AND BLACKROCK WATER BILL.

On the Order for Second Reading,

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) moved :—

"That the Order [18th February] that the Bray, Dalkey, Kingstown and Blackrock Water Bill be read a second time be read and discharged. That the Bill be withdrawn."

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) who had the following Motion on the Paper :—

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee to insert Clauses in regard to Bray and Dalkey townships, similar to those inserted in the Kingstown and Blackrock Drainage Act, 1893, as to the franchise, registration, and period of qualification of voters"—

said, that the promoters having abandoned the Bill, his Instruction could not be moved. He understood that the Bray Commissioners were promoting another Water Bill, and he would move his Instruction to the Committee that considered that Bill.

Motion agreed to, and Bill withdrawn.

PISTOLS BILL.

Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) brought up the Report of the Grand Committee on Law on the Pistols Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill, as amended, be considered To-morrow.

QUESTIONS.

EXCISE AND CUSTOMS DUTIES IN INDIA.

MR. T. SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India (1) whether, in many of the provinces of India, the Excise Duty on proof spirits is below the Customs Duty on imported spirits, and below the Home Excise Duty; (2) whether the Excise and Customs Duty could be equalised, so as in no case to be below the maximum duty now levied, either in India or in this country; and (3) whether, if this were done, it would be possible to supply the deficit in the Revenue by this means, and so relieve the Indian Budget?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The facts are as stated in the first clause of my hon. Friend's question. The Excise Duties have of late years been enhanced, and the process of enhancement is still going on; but a sudden and large increase of this form of taxation is not considered expedient.

NAVIGATION OF THE SHANNON.

MR. J. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has received a memorial from the people living on the borders of the Shannon, from Battle Bridge to the Wooden Bridge, praying to have the river deepened and made navigable for a distance of two miles; and whether, in view of the distress in that locality, and the necessity of providing employment for the people, he can state when it is proposed to undertake drainage works on this portion of the Shannon?

SIR JOHN HIBBERT: Assuming that the work mentioned in the question is the removal of a shoal at Drumherriff, in the bed of the river Shannon, which forms part of certain improvements provided for by vote, the Board of Works hope to be in a position to commence work on a small scale about the 1st proximo.

SHEFFIELD TELEGRAPHISTS.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is a fact that, in the telegraph department of the Sheffield Post Office, a number of telegraphists' duties of eight hours per day have been divided into two periods, covering between them over 10 and 12 hours of the day; whether this arrangement has the effect of saving the department the half-hour given for meal relief on a continuous eight hours' duty, although most of the changes do not admit of meals being obtained at meal times; and whether he intends that these arrangements should continue in force?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): It is the fact that, out of a force of 88 telegraphists, 26 instead of 15 as hitherto will have their duties divided into two periods, not, of course, in any case exceeding eight hours in all, but extending over 10 and 12 hours a day. Such an arrangement is indispensable if the force at the disposal of the Department is to be employed to the best advantage. It may be the case that this arrangement of duties will have the effect in some cases of doing away with the meal relief in the middle of the day. I am giving instructions that it shall not be made with this object alone, but only where it is desirable for the other reasons, which I have already indicated.

MILITARY BANDS IN THE ROYAL PARKS.

MR. J. AIRD (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if arrangements can be made for Military bands to play in the Royal Parks during the coming season, especially on Saturday afternoons and Bank Holidays?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): For some time past this matter has received my attention. I am glad to be able to tell the hon. Member that I have been informed by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge that arrangements are being made for a Military band to play on certain days in Hyde Park during the spring and summer.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Will that be extended to the parks in Dublin?

MR. H. GLADSTONE: That is beyond my jurisdiction.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. D. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, in view of the great distress prevailing in the district, the Government intend to complete the road in the parish of Kilcrohane West, barony of South Dunkerron, county Kerry, from Barnatra Strand to Liss, commenced by the late Government as a relief work in 1890?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board inform me that their Inspector has frequently visited this Union of late, but that so far he does not consider there is any necessity for starting relief works. The Inspector will again shortly visit the Union, and report further as to its condition.

MR. T. D. SULLIVAN (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that memorials, signed by clergymen and other inhabitants of the Dunfanaghy Union, county Donegal, were sent three weeks ago to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, testifying to the existence of acute distress in several parts of that union, and pressing for the opening of some public works to afford relief to the people; and what action, if any, has been taken by the Government in consequence of those representations?

MR. J. MORLEY: Representations have been made by clergymen and others to the effect stated in my hon. Friend's question, and have formed the subject of investigation by the Local Government Board. The Board informs me that relief in the Dunfanaghy Union, as compared with the corresponding period of last year, shows a decrease both as regards indoor and outdoor relief, and that the extended powers of affording relief of the latter kind which have been offered to the guardians should, in the opinion of the Board, enable them to deal with any isolated cases of destitution that may arise in the union. The people rely very much upon the earnings they make in Scotland, where they migrate in large numbers and earn as much there in one month as they could do on relief works in five months, and even assuming the circumstances of the people necessitated the opening of works the Board are of opinion that very few would avail themselves of employment at the low rate of wages fixed for these works. The condition of this union will continue to receive the careful attention of the Local Government Board, and any change in the condition of the people such as to justify the opening of works will be at once brought under the notice of Government.

MACCLESFIELD SCHOOL BOARD.

MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that the Macclesfield School Board have postponed action on the recent communication from the Education Department, and have caused the petition of parents in Macclesfield for free education to be printed with the names of the signatories; whether he is also aware that the names of the signatories have been supplied to the head master of Christ Church Voluntary School and the masters of other schools; and that the head master has publicly called the children of the petitioners out of their classes and asked them why their parents had signed the petition, what wages the parents and other members of their families are receiving, how many children there are in each family, and has also informed the children that they must ask their parents to write a letter to him stating their willingness to withdraw their signatures from the petition, in default of which the children would be expelled from the school; whether the communication of the signatories to the head master and the subsequent action of the head master are illegal, and in contravention of the Education Act of 1891; and whether the Education Department will take steps to stop proceedings calculated to prevent parents from exercising their rights under the Act of 1891? The hon. Member said he wished to ask a supplementary question of the right hon. Gentleman, as follows: Whether he was aware that the petitioners had been further intimidated by the publication of their names and addresses in the local Press; and whether the memorandum of the Department on the Act of 1891 did not expressly lay down that free education was the unconditional right of every parent, and that any special inquiry into the circumstances of a parent, or his reasons for asking for free education, was not contemplated by the Act.

Mr. BROMLEY - DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the signatories to the representation which he has received from Macclesfield asking for free education have previously made application to the school authorities for free places, and whether he has reason to believe that there is any lack of free places in the borough; whether he is aware that certain of the signatories allege that they signed through misrepresentation of the object in view; that in one instance a blank sheet of paper was taken into a mill for the purpose of collecting signatures; that many of those who signed are persons who either have no children attending elementary schools or have children who are already being educated without payment of fees; and whether he will cause specific inquiry to be made into the truth of these allegations?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. Acland, York, W. R., Rotherham): I believe the names have been published in the local Press. The School Board are, I understand, making inquiries in accordance with the request of the Education Department. The Department do not discourage reasonable publicity with respect to petitions for free education. But if any such direct or indirect pressure should be put on parents as will deter them from exercising their absolute legal right to free education, it is much to be deprecated. With reference to Christ Church School, Her Majesty's inspector has visited it and has forwarded the information which he received on this question from the head master. As I have received a number of letters from parents and others which are of a more or less conflicting character, I propose shortly to send an officer of the Department to inquire into the whole matter, and cannot at present make a definite statement on the case. As to the question which appears lower down on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Macclesfield, it is not necessary under the Act of Parliament that those who claim free education for their children should apply to the school authorities before sending a petition to the Department, and I am not aware whether they did so in this case. The lack of free places and the other matters mentioned in the question will be subjects of the inquiry to which I have referred.

Mr. BROMLEY - DAVENPORT asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the originator of these charges had endeavoured to escape from an action for libel by tendering a written abject apology and retractation, and whether, in fairness to honourable public servants, he would see that the result of any inquiries made would be given the same measure of publicity as had been given to these unjust accusations.

Mr. ACLAND: Yes, Sir. I desire to make the fullest possible inquiries into the matter. I have had so many statements from the Vicar and many others, I want to get to the bottom of the matter.

*Mr. CHANNING asked whether all the matters referred to would not be fully investigated by the gentleman who conducted the inquiry, who, he hoped, would be absolutely impartial.

Mr. ACLAND: Yes.

EDUCATION AT MATLOCK.

Mr. J. A. JACOBY (Derbyshire, Mid): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education (1) whether a final notice, issued to Matlock, Derbyshire, for about 100 free places, expired some months ago; and whether these free places have yet been supplied; if not, whether he will put the Act of Parliament in force and set up a School Board without further delay?

The same hon. Member further asked (2) whether the structural alterations in the British School, Matlock, called for in February, 1892, the plans for which were approved in February, 1893, have yet been made; if not, whether the Department intends to continue its recognition of the school after the close of the current school year; (3) whether Her Majesty's Inspector recommended that the managers of St. Giles' Church of England Schools, Matlock, should be called upon to provide a playground; and whether the managers have taken any steps to carry out this recommendation; if not, whether the Department is going to take measures to enforce it?

MR. ACLAND, in reply, said: (1) A final notice for 103 free places with a period of one month, was issued on July 26 last. But while this notice was running, an order of the Derbyshire County Council, under the Local Government Act of 1888, divided Matlock into two parishes, and made the notices issued inapplicable. The whole inquiry had to be gone into again, and a fresh notice could not be issued till the 4th of this month, which is now running its course. (2) The alterations in the British School, for which plans were approved in February, 1893, have not been made. I understand that the managers are unable to raise funds, and that the school is likely to be closed. The report for the school year just ended is now being considered. (3) Her Majesty's Inspector reports that the Matlock Church School is provided with a playground, and no recommendation appears to have been made with regard to it.

PARISH COUNCILS AND ASSISTANT OVERSEERS.

MR. BROMLEY DAVENPORT: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether a Parish Council will have power, next April, to revoke the appointment of an assistant overseer who has been appointed by a Board of Guardians for a township which was partly urban and partly rural, and is now separated?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): An assistant overseer who was appointed by a Board of Guardians has not become an officer of the Parish Council elected for any part of the area for which he was appointed, and the Council have no power to determine his appointment.

REBELLION IN HAWAII.

MR. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a British subject, named Rickard, has been sentenced to 35 years' imprisonment for having, as was alleged, been concerned in a Royalist rebellion in Hawaii in favour of the deposed Queen; and, if so, whether, on account of the severity of the sentence, Her Majesty's Government will endeavour to procure a mitigation of the sentence?

Mr. J. A. Jacoby.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Rickard was originally condemned to death, but this sentence has been commuted to 35 years' imprisonment with hard labour and a fine of 10,000 dols. As soon as full reports are received, the question raised by my hon. Friend will be considered.

THE FIRE AT TRINIDAD.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the rapid spread and great extent of the calamitous fire in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, was attributable to inadequacy of the water supply; whether he is aware that some years ago the Local Authorities expressed the opinion that the existing water supply was quite inadequate to cope with any extensive fire, and that immediately before the breaking out of the recent fire a petition to Her Majesty the Queen was in course of signature in Port-of-Spain, praying that the water supply of the town might be made sufficient; and whether he can state what steps have been taken since 1890 to improve the said water supply?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): No details have yet been received of the fire. The question of the improvement of the existing water supply has for some time been under the consideration of the Local Authorities, but no scheme has yet been adopted. The matter has been lately placed in the hands of an eminent London Civil Engineer.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give any information as to the reported agreement between the Governments of the Dominion of Canada and the Colony of Newfoundland to discuss, with a view to coming to terms, proposals for the entry of Newfoundland into the Dominion; at what date are the negotiations to commence; and will the occasion be taken for a fresh endeavour to determine the questions still in dispute with France in reference to the lobster fishery rights on portions of the shores of Newfoundland?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I understand that the Governments of Canada and Newfoundland have agreed to have a Conference at Ottawa to discuss the question of the entry of Newfoundland into the Dominion, but I cannot give any further information in regard to it at the present moment.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government of Newfoundland have yet replied to the offer of Her Majesty's Government to assist prevailing and urgent distress from the public funds?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: A reply has been received from the Newfoundland Government; and Sir Herbert Murray, late Chairman of the Board of Customs, will shortly start for Newfoundland as Her Majesty's Commissioner. The Governor has been authorised to make disbursements in urgent cases previous to Sir Herbert Murray's arrival.

THE ISLE OF ACHILL.

MR. W. E. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, having regard to the fact that Dugort, Isle of Achill, is visited by large and increasing numbers of tourists; that the Light Railway to Achill Sound, distant eight miles, will be shortly opened; and that it is a coastguard and constabulary station, he will consider the question of extending the postal telegraph from Achill Sound for the accommodation of the population living in Lower Achill?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: The question of extending the telegraph to Dugort was carefully considered last autumn, but as it was estimated that the receipts would fall far short of the expenses, I regret that it was not in my power to grant a telegraph office. If it is likely that a guarantee to secure the Department against loss will be forthcoming, I shall be glad to receive a communication from the hon. Member on the subject.

MARGARINE.

MR. W. O'BRIEN (Cork): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the large and increasing importation into British ports of foreign mixtures of margarine and other substances purporting to be butter; in how many cases have the officers of Her Majesty's Customs or Inland Revenue exercised the authority conferred upon them by Clause 8 of the Margarine Act, 1887, to take samples at the ports of entry from any package suspected of containing fraudulent substitutes or mixtures, and in how many cases have prosecutions been instituted; and whether he will issue a circular calling the attention of Customs officers at the ports of entry to the necessity for a more stringent inspection of the stuff imported by foreign margarine manufacturers and sold as butter?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby) said, he was informed by the Customs authorities that they had no information as to a large increase in the importation into British ports of margarine and other substances purporting to be butter. If trustworthy information was furnished in respect of the importation, the Customs authorities would take such action as is in their power, but they were not the persons primarily responsible for taking action under the Margarine Act.

MR. W. O'BRIEN asked whether it was not the duty of the Customs officers to take action themselves? Was there not a rule that, before the Customs authorities would interfere, the person giving information as to a suspected matter was obliged to lodge one and a-half times the value of the package? Would the right hon. Gentleman inquire into this matter, and see whether that rule ought not to be abolished as a great discouragement to persons giving information?

SIR W. HARCOURT said, he would inquire; but he understood that the Customs were not the authority who primarily took charge of those questions under the Margarine Act. There were other authorities under that Act. The Customs had the power to take samples to be examined, and they looked into the information laid before them?

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): What Department has charge of this matter?

SIR W. HARCOURT: There are several local departments possessing the authority to inquire into the subject.

MR. W. O'BRIEN: What action have the Customs officers taken? Was it to be taken for granted that the powers of the Margarine Act had remained a dead letter up to the present?

Sir W. HARCOURT said, there was no information that any fraudulent importation took place.

THE DISPUTE IN THE BOOT TRADE.

Mr. J. AIRD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if the Department will again offer their services to adjust the unhappy difficulty in the boot trade?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): The Board of Trade have been giving close and constant attention to the dispute which has unfortunately arisen in the boot and shoe industry. It is known to both parties to the dispute that the good offices of the Board are at their disposal should they be desired, and if any opportunity presents itself in which those good offices can be usefully employed they will readily be made available.

CROWN LAND IN PALL MALL.

Mr. AIRD: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if he can explain the cause of the delay in the utilisation of the valuable Crown land in Pall Mall, and until recently the site of Her Majesty's Opera House?

*The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir J. T. Hibbert, Oldham): The delay does not rest with the Crown, but with those interested in the lease agreed to be granted, who have, it is understood, experienced difficulties in making the necessary arrangements for carrying out the agreement with the Crown.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Does the answer apply to Lord Clanricarde?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I am unable to answer the hon. Member.

STEAM TRAWLING IN THE HIGHLANDS.

Sir D. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that a steam trawler has been recently working in the channel between Ardnamurchan and Arisaig, and between the island of Gigg and the mainland, causing serious injury to the fishing ground in that locality; and whether there is any gunboat in that portion of the West Highlands to protect the local fishermen; and, if not, if he will send one?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. Trevelyan, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I am not aware that a steam trawler has been working in the area referred to. H.M.S. *Starling* has for some time been engaged inquiring into complaints further north, her headquarters being at Stornoway. An application will, however, be made to the Admiralty to permit the *Starling* to investigate the matter. The *Starling* is still engaged in protection duty in northwest Highlands, H.M.S. *Jackal* is protecting Moray Firth, H.M.S. *Onyx* is in Orkney and Shetland, and the *Active* has recently been at Isle of Uig.

THE MULL TELEGRAPH CABLE.

Sir D. MACFARLANE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if his attention has been called to the great inconvenience caused to the public in Mull, Coll and Tiree by the breaking of the telegraph wire between Oban and Tobermory; and when he expects that communication will be re-established?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: I am, of course, well aware of the interruption of the telegraph cable to Mull, and it will, I hope, be possible to send one of the ships of the Department to repair it within a fortnight.

PARISH MEETINGS.

Major DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether it is necessary, in order to fulfil the provisions of the Local Government Act of 1894, that the annual parish meeting shall be held within seven days before or after 25th March next in every parish, even if no business has to be transacted; and, in the case of a parish divided into wards, if such a meeting is necessary; and, if at any time a parish meeting is called for any purpose other than the election of councillors, whether the chairman of the Parish Council has the option of summoning either one parish meeting for the whole parish or separate parish meetings for each ward?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Act requires that there shall be an annual assembly of the parish meeting in every rural parish on the 25th March, or within seven days before or after that day, and no exception is made as regards the present year. The meeting must be held for the whole parish, even if it is divided into wards. Separate parish meetings in wards are only held for the election of Parish Councillors.

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): In the event of there being no business, and no meeting being held, is anyone liable to a penalty?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Act requires that there should be a meeting.

*Mr. T. G. BOWLES: But does it impose a penalty?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE was understood to reply in the negative.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING.

Mr. S. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that Messrs. Waterlow and Sons, who have the printing contract for the "Parliamentary Debates," are employing labour in their printing department at from 8s. to 14s. per week, while the Trade Union rate of wages in this department is 20s. per week; and that in the department where the cheap labour is employed it is kept going at full time, while in the other departments, where Trade Union rates of wages prevail, the workpeople are only averaging about four days per week; and whether, in view of the undertaking he gave on the 3rd August, 1893, on Messrs. M'Corquodale's case, he will take steps to remedy this state of things?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: The subject of this question having been referred to Messrs. Waterlow, the chairman of the firm has replied as follows:—

> "Waterlow and Sons Limited are employing Trade Union labour, and are recognised as what is termed a 'fair house' by the London Society of Compositors, and by the machine minders and pressmen, and it is not true that they are paying wages in those departments below the Trade Union rate."

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs): Is there any understanding that the printing referred to is carried out in London?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: Yes, I think so.

THE SCREENING OF SHIPS' SIDE LIGHTS.

*Sir DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is in a position to inform the House when the Committee upon the Screening of Sidelights will meet; and if there is any further information he can give us as to the constitution of the Committee?

Mr. J. BRYCE: Sir Francis Jeune, President of the Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice, has been good enough to accept the Chairmanship of this Committee, and, as he is returning to London this week, I hope that arrangements may be very shortly made for its meeting.

THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS.

*Mr. J. G. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, having regard to the fact that the Postmaster General reports inability, owing to the rules of the Treasury, to extend telegraphic and postal communication in many parts of the western mainland of Ross-shire and in the island of Lewis without guarantees, which the places named are unable to give, and seeing that the circumstances of the people of these districts are quite exceptional, and that the development of the fishing industry is of great national and local importance, the Treasury will waive or modify the regulations so that the Postmaster General may have discretionary powers to deal with such cases?

Sir W. HARCOURT: This is a subject in which I have taken a great personal interest, owing to my intimate acquaintance with the west Highlands and islands, and have in former times done something to promote telegraphic communication in those remote regions. I recognise that their circumstances are quite exceptional; but the accommodation is also exceptional, and telegraphic communication is there given to an extent which certainly is not afforded in other parts of the United Kingdom to anything like the same extent under similar conditions.

*Mr. WEIR: Am I to understand that the right hon. Gentleman will make no effort to put the people of these parts in a better position as to postal and telegraphic communication?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I have already made a considerable effort.

*Mr. J. G. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, having regard to the fact that the Scottish Office has no funds at its disposal for the construction of footpaths and roads in populous parts of the Island of Lewis and the western mainland of Ross-shire, and that the local authority is unable to provide funds for the construction of such footpaths and roads, the Treasury will put the Scottish Office in possession of means to carry out the unfinished footpaths and roads commenced in 1893, more especially those between townships and public schools?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: If my hon. Friend will be good enough to refer to page 496 of the Estimates for the coming year, he will find that provision has been made for the purposes in question.

KITCHEN BOILER EXPLOSIONS.

Mr. J. G. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a number of persons have been killed and many injured owing to kitchen boiler explosions during the recent frost; and whether, having regard to the fact that the Department has no power to enforce regulations with reference to kitchen boilers, he will introduce a Bill to amend the Boiler Explosions Act of 1890, by striking out from Clause 2 the words which exempt boilers used exclusively for domestic purposes from the provisions of the Act?

Mr. J. BRYCE: I have seen in the newspapers during the recent frost reports of kitchen boiler explosions unhappily attended in some cases with serious personal injury, but it is not clear how far a formal inquiry by a Government Department in each case of explosion in a private house would be of public advantage, or would meet with public approval. Whenever an accident is fatal, there is, of course, a coroner's inquest. The principal causes of these explosions are well known, and I am at present considering whether some means may not be adopted of warning householders, as winter approaches, of the means to be adopted to prevent accidents.

LIGHTING OF THE SCOTCH COASTS.

Mr. J. G. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses have reported that a lighthouse on Tiumpan Head is among the first eight in a list of works which the Committee consider necessary for the more efficient lighting and marking of the coasts of Scotland; that Tiumpan Head is a constant source of danger to the large fishing population in the Point district, Island of Lewis; that in December last 19 Lewis fishermen were drowned in Broad Bay; that several fishermen from the east coast were recently lost at Tiumpan Head Point; and that these disasters would probably have been averted if there had been a lighthouse at this place; and whether, in view of these facts, arrangements will be made to put this work in hand without delay?

Mr. J. BRYCE: The Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses have not yet obtained the statutory sanction of the Trinity House to the erection of a lighthouse on Tiumpan Head, and they have not included this work in their Estimates for the coming year.

SWAZILAND.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is a fact the Boer Commando has been withdrawn from the borders of Swaziland; and whether Her Majesty's Government can give the House any information as to the recent relations between the Boers and the Swazis?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I cannot at the present time say any more than that Sir H. Loch considers the peaceful acceptance of the Convention by the Swazis as being very hopeful. He adds that Generals Joubert and Smit appear to have conducted their mission with tact, consideration and judgment.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Have the Swazis signed or issued the organic proclamation?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The organic proclamation no longer exists.

THE CLIFDEN UNION, IRELAND.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the inquiry held by the Local Government Board into a report made by Miss Mary Lydon, Clifden, that Mr. James Mongan, poor rate collector, was concerned in a contract for the supply of goods for outdoor relief purposes in Clifden Union, and to the report of the Local Government Board that Mr. James Mongan does not reside in his collecting district, and is engaged in a retail trade, contrary to Article 29 of the General Regulations, and their request to the Guardians to call apon this officer to surrender his licence and sever his connection with retail business or to resign his position as collector, are the Local Government Board aware that this collector is still a publican and engaged in the retail trade; and what steps do the Local Government Board intend taking in this case in order to put a stop to such illegal conduct by officers of Unions?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board in June of last year held an inquiry on oath into the charge preferred against this poor rate collector that he was concerned in a contract for a supply of goods for purposes of outdoor relief. The charge was not, however, supported by evidence. As regards the residence of the collector, and his engagement in retail trade, it was subsequently proved to the satisfaction of the Board that his residence was within 300 yards of the borders of his district, and he further gave a written undertaking to open an office not in any way connected with his residence in Clifden where rates could be paid, and not to contract directly or indirectly for goods supplied for outdoor relief purposes. On this undertaking, which the collector has carried out, the Local Government Board yielded to the wishes of the Guardians to retain the collector's services.

THE WELSH CHURCH BILL.

Mr. D. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state how much of the income of £234,000 now paid to parochial incumbents in Wales and Monmouthshire will, under the Established Church (Wales) Bill, be vested in the County Councils of Cardiff, Swansea, and Newport respectively?

Mr. ASQUITH: I must refer my hon. Friend to the Return which was granted on his Motion last year. The figures there set forth will enable him to answer the question, and I have no further information which would enable me to supplement them.

Mr. D. THOMAS: My right hon. Friend is quite wrong; the information cannot be got from the Return. In the Return the endowments of Cardiff and Swansea are included in those of Glamorganshire, and the endowment of Newport in those of Monmouthshire. They are not distinguished.

Mr. ASQUITH: I will examine the Returns.

PROPOSED NEW ROAD IN DUBLIN.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury who are the persons responsible for preventing advantage being taken of the offer of the Board of Works towards the new road between Chapelizod and the strawberry beds, which they have made with a view to save traffic and repairs to the Phœnix Park Road; is he aware that all the market gardeners who use the park route are strongly in favour of the Board of Works terms being accepted; will he inquire whether any of the opponents of the road are in enjoyment of privileges for traffic through the park; and will the Board of Works continue these privileges if they find that the persons enjoying them are those who block the opening of a public road; and in view of the fact that the new road is already partly completed for private use, can the Board of Works bring any pressure to bear to remove the obstacles offered to the completion of it as a public highway?

Sir JOHN HIBBERT: At the late Presentment Sessions in Blanchardstown certain parties who alleged that their property would have been affected by the proposed new road, and some of whom are permitted to pass carts through the Phœnix Park, tendered legal objections to the application, founded on defects of procedure. In consequence of these defects the parties making the application withdrew it. At the present juncture I should prefer to mention no names. Judging from what appeared in the public Press, the project was supported by the people of the locality, as shown by the subscriptions collected. There has been no withdrawal of the passes to the parties mentioned, but the passes are necessarily provisional and carry no rights. The Board are considering what steps, if any, can be taken at the forthcoming meeting of the Grand Jury at Easter to assist the local parties, as the application at Presentment Sessions cannot be renewed for 12 months.

THE TROOPSHIP "TAMAR."

Mr. E. T. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty if he will be good enough to inform the House how long it took the troopship *Tamar* to reach Cape Town after leaving Queenstown on the 7th July last; whether it is a fact that she carried in all 1,100 souls, or 200 more than would have been allowed under Board of Trade regulations; if the troops carried comprised in the first class 32 officers, with 10 wives, and 15 children, total 57, berths being allotted for only 48, leaving 9 unprovided for, who had to sleep on the mess tables or saloon; whether, in the second class, there were three married officers, with their wives and children, together 16, whilst berths were allotted for only 6, leaving 10 unprovided for; whether, in the third class, there were 786 men, for whom only 725 berths or hammocks were allotted, leaving 58 unprovided for, besides 34 women and 52 children, of whom 22 were unprovided for, being stowed on the floor and lockers; whether it is true that the sanitary condition and ventilation were so bad that vermin made its appearance early on the voyage; and will he state whether any of the officials have been held responsible?

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee): The *Tamar* is no longer in commission. In her last voyage she took 28 days from Queenstown to Table Bay. She left England with 1,167 souls on board. The Boardof Trade Regulations do not apply to the ships of the Royal Navy, including troopships. In the first class, there were 32 officers, 10 ladies, and 16 children, counting, according to custom, as 49½ adults, for whom 49 berths were provided, one child being under one year of age. In the second class there were 4 officers, 3 wives, and 10 children, counting as 12 adults, for whom there were 10 berths and 2 hammocks. In the third class, the *Tamar* had accommodation for 810 non-commissioned officers and men; 781 were embarked, each one being provided with a hammock and a blanket. There were also 35 women and 63 children, counting as 62 adults, for whom 46 berths were provided, as 28 children were under five years of age, and 10 under one years of age. No report had been received of bad sanitary condition, bad ventilation, or vermin on board the *Tamar*. The Director of Transports is responsible for the arrangements of the Transport Service.

CENTRAL AFRICA.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he will inform the House what is the amount of territory (in square miles) that was assigned to the Congo Free State by the Anglo-Congo Treaty of 12th May 1894, and of which the Congo State was deprived by the Treaty between France and the Congo State of 14th August 1894.

Sir E. GREY: A reference to Sir Edward Hertslet's "Map of Africa," Vol. II., page 1002, will give the geographical definition of the territory over which the Free State has bound itself not to exercise influence; but I cannot give the number of square miles.

THE LIFEBOAT SERVICE.

Mr. E. H. BAYLEY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with regard to the fact that over 4,000 wrecks and sea casualties take place annually round the coasts of the United Kingdom, causing loss of property valued at £10,000,000, and of 650 lives per annum; whether his attention has been called to the system adopted by the United States Government, by which over £1,000,000 sterling worth of property is saved per annum, and the loss of life is officially reported as reduced 80 per cent.; whether his attention has been called to a resolution passed unanimously at the Trades Union Congress. held at Norwich, on 5th September last, and to a similar resolution passed at a Conference of workmen at Belfast, calling attention to the serious loss of life by shipwreck on our coasts, whereby hundreds of sailors' wives and families are deprived of their breadwinners, and asking that the efficiency, or otherwise, of life-saving arrangements shall not depend upon philanthropy or charity, but be provided by the State; whether he is aware that an address to the Government has been signed by 100 Members of Parliament, asking for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the arrangements for life-saving upon the coasts of the United Kingdom; and whether he will comply with the request, in view of the fact that no Parliamentary inquiry upon the subject in question has ever been held?

Sir W. HARCOURT: As I understand, this is a proposal to take over at the public cost the service of the lifeboats now so admirably discharged by the Lifeboat Institution. That is a very serious question at a time when so many fresh demands are being made upon the Exchequer for State aid in all directions. Before I could ask the House to appoint a Committee on this subject I must seek some further information as to the grounds of such an inquiry.

Mr. E. H. BAYLEY: I shall take an early opportunity of moving the Adjournment of the House to call attention to this question.

THE RULES OF PROCEDURE.

Mr. W. BIRKMYRE (Ayr Burghs): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government are disposed to introduce any proposals for amending the Rules of Procedure of the House, so as to secure a time limit on speeches delivered therein, and that no Member shall, when the House is in Committee, be entitled to speak more than once on the same Motion?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am very favourably disposed to the subjects of the hon. Member's question, and should be delighted myself to come under his rule; and the shorter the limits he imposed, the better I should be pleased. But of all duties to he imposed upon a Government this is the most formidable, and I would ask my hon. Friend, in the words of an old Scotch saying which he will recognise, "Who is to bell the cat?"

Mr. BIRKMYRE: Is the right hon. Gentleman willing to appoint a Committee to open up the whole question of Parliamentary procedure? Lord Rosebery promised very favourable consideration to the question elsewhere.

No answer was returned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

On the Motion to go into Supply,

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) said, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman a question which may save the House the trouble of dividing on the Motion standing in his name with regard to the suspension of the 12 o'clock Rule. I wish to ask whether, by suspending the 12 o'clock Rule, the right hon. Gentleman contemplates continuing the discussion of Supply for half-an-hour or an hour, or whether he intends to press Supply through, even should questions arise which require, in the opinion of any section of the House, moderate time for discussion? I am not aware that there are such questions, but it is never possible to say what necessity may arise.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I should not wish unnecessarily to press on the House any protracted sitting; but I am obliged to adhere—after making careful inquiries at the Treasury—to the absolute necessity for closing Supply to-night, and for taking the Report of Supply and the First Reading of the Appropriation Bill on the 21st inst. That is the latest date on which it can be taken. I have it on the authority of Sir E. Hamilton of the Treasury that the 28th inst. is the latest date on which the Royal Assent can be given consistently with the administration of the Treasury. That being so, we must have the first stage of the Appropriation Bill on the 21st. I have looked at the dates on which the Royal Assent has been given in previous years, and I find that they have varied from March 29th to the 28th. Where the 28th is necessary is where the 31st is a *dies non*, and this year it is a Sunday. The 29th is possible when the 31st is an ordinary week day. In 1893 we were obliged to take the Royal Assent on the 28th, because the 31st was a Good Friday. In order to make preparation for payments on April 1, it is necessary that there should be two working days intervening, that the business of the Treasury may be managed. It is very undesirable that these matters should be in dispute year after year. There should be some fixed rule; and it would be for the benefit of both sides to have some clear understanding of what are the requirements of the public service. In 1892 the right hon. Gentleman opposite fixed the 21st as the last day for Report of Supply; and his statement at that time was as follows :—

> "Monday, March 21, is the last day on which the Appropriation Act can be introduced."

That statement was made upon the same information which I have. On March 16th, 1893, I made a statement on the authority of Mr. Hamilton of the Treasury, and, in order that the House may clearly understand how the matter stands, I will quote it :—

> "Until the Ways and Means Bill has received the Royal Assent in the usual manner, the Treasury are unable to take any steps with respect to the issue of the money required for the supplementary and excess grants for the expiring year. On the signification of the Royal Assent, the first proceeding is to obtain credit from the Audit Office, and to advise the departments that the money is available. Communications have to be made with Ireland, and it would be obviously imprudent to trust to the telegraph alone, without a written confirmation, for any error not detected before the close of the financial year is irreparable. It is evident, if the messenger only arrives on Wednesday afternoon, subsequently to which the Royal Assent has to be signified, any unpunctuality of the train would make it impossible to get written advices over to Ireland by post. At any rate, the risk is too great to admit of our being able to take the responsibility of being driven into such close quarters."

I have a further statement, which is to the effect that the House had been on more than one occasion told that the Royal Assent to the Ways and Means Bill must be signified on the second day before the close of the financial year. The present financial year closed on Saturday, the 30th, therefore the Royal Assent should be signified on the Thursday. In the statement it is further said that the reason for that is that the Treasury must have sufficient time to advise the departments that the money for meeting the payments to be made before the end of the financial year is available. Those advices must be given in writing, and must be confirmed in writing, and to enable that to be done the last Parliamentary stage of the Bill must be got through on Tuesday the 26th. That statement is consistent with what I have already said. I take it that the 28th is the fixed limit for the Royal assent to the Appropriation Bill. Under the circumstances I think it would be to the advantage of the House that we should have some fixed rule in the matter by which the House should be guided, so that the question should not be one for wrangle whenever it arises. I hope the House will act on the precedent of former times.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, it would be entirely out of order that he should attempt to argue the case which the right hon. Gentleman, in a very fair spirit, had put before them. If argument be necessary, the proper time for it would be later to-night. The last thing the Opposition desired was to drive the Government either into any illegality or to drive the departments into extreme inconvenience. If it should turn out that there were really important subjects in connection with the Estimates demanding discussion, would the Government give them an opportunity of discussing them on the Appropriation Bill itself?

Sir W. HARCOURT said, that was a very fair demand, and he would certainly be prepared to meet it.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) asked if there would be any difficulty in putting the Report of Supply down as the first Order on Thursday, which would allow points to be raised for which there might not be time to-night?

Sir W. HARCOURT promised to consider the point.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) asked whether, as the time for getting the Supplementary Votes was so limited, the right hon. Gentleman would postpone all the Business for which there was not the same urgency. Would he, for instance, agree to the postponement of the Ordnance Factory Vote?

Sir W. HARCOURT said, he was told that that was a Vote it was necessary to take to-night.

THE TWELVE O'CLOCK RULE.

Sir W. HARCOURT then Moved, and it was agreed,

> * "That the proceedings of the Committee of Supply, if under discussion at 12 o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House."

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

The House then went into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Mellor in the Chair.

ARMY ESTIMATES 1895-6.

On the Supplementary Vote for £100 for the services of the Ordnance Factories,

Mr. R. W. HANBURY asked that the ordinary Ordnance Factory Vote for the year be postponed. If the Government would accede to his request the Supplementary Ordnance Vote might be taken without discussion, so far as he was personally concerned.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs) said, the Treasury had always insisted that the Ordnance Vote and Supplementary Ordnance Vote should be taken at the same time. It was therefore proposed to take the Votes together.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) said, the Secretary of State for War would recollect that last year the Birmingham Members represented that the Government were taking from one of the factories in Birmingham a considerable part of the machinery, and removing it to Enfield or elsewhere. The Secretary for War considered the circumstances, and made an arrangement which, although not entirely satisfactory, was, he believed, all he could do at the time. That arrangement was, that while a portion of the orders was to be given to the Small Arms Factory, another portion of that factory was to be fully employed in repairs, which repairs were to be removed from the factory in Bagot Street. He desired to know whether any change had been made, or was going to be made in that direction.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN did not think so. He understood the arrangement had been successfully carried out, and that the disturbance which surrounded the Birmingham factories and Enfield had been allayed in a way which would prove satisfactory to those concerned.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN said, the answer was entirely satisfactory, but in order to be quite certain, he might say it had been stated that an order had been received in Birmingham for the transference of the Bagot Street station, which had been for a period of 35 years in the city, to Woolwich.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. W. Woodall, Staffordshire, Hanley) said, there was not the smallest truth in the statement.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR supported the appeal which had been made by the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury). He understood the Treasury had laid it down that, as a rule, some nominal sum should be granted by the House in order to justify them in expending money in carrying out the ordnance work. Although he admitted that on the whole it was desirable the Vote should be discussed now, it must be borne in mind that on two or three occasions during the late Government's tenure of Office, the discussion of the Vote was postponed, and postponed without any serious consequences. It was most undesirable that late at night the Committee should be involved in one of those wrangles with which they were all too familiar, and the Government would themselves be responsible for any such unhappy consequences if they deliberately congested the business of the House by bringing on a Vote to-night which, after all, might be postponed without breaking the law, or submitting any Department to unnecessary inconvenience.

Sir W. HARCOURT admitted that it was not absolutely indispensable to take this particular Vote to-night. He suggested that the Vote should be postponed for the present, and that if it were found they had time to take the discussion upon it to-night they should do so. They must, however, have the Supplementary Vote.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he was grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for the courteous manner in which he had met the request of the Opposition. He hoped the Ordnance Vote would not be brought on after 11 o'clock.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said, that, as one of the unfortunate Members who had been left out of the general agreement between the Front Benches, he asked, particularly as he was interested in the Vote, that the

Ordnance Vote should not be taken up after 11 o'clock.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Understand, we are to have the Supplementary Vote.

Mr. BALFOUR: Hear, hear!

Sir W. HARCOURT: As regards the other question, I will not ask the House to sit to consider the Ordnance Vote after half-past 12 o'clock, and as to the time the Vote should be taken up, I will make inquiries amongst hon. Members.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

On the Vote for a supplementary sum of £100 for Ordnance Factories—

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) wished for an assurance that none of the money for Ordnance factories would be spent for setting up forging presses at Woolwich. A promise had been given by the Government that those works would not be set up in competition with similar works opened by private enterprise in other places; and, acting on that assurance, large sums of money had been spent on such works by private firms.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling) said, he was able to give the assurance asked for. There had been considerable correspondence and consultation on this subject, and the Government gave to one of the hon. Gentleman's colleagues in the representation of Sheffield—his right hon. Friend the Member for the Brightside Division, Mr. Mundella—who had acted as an intermediary between private firms and the Government, that these presses would not be set up at Woolwich. There was no intention on the part of the Government of departing from that arrangement or understanding.

Vote agreed to.

On the Vote for a Supplementary Sum of £29,000 as a Grant in Aid of the Revenue of the Island of Cyprus—

*Mr. R. PIERPOINT (Warrington) said, he would not discuss the question whether Cyprus was or was not a valuable acquisition to England; but he desired to say a few words on the treatment of the people of the island by this country. Before coming to the important part of his subject, he should like to comment on some of the remarks made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in regard to Cyprus when the Vote was under the consideration of the Committee a few evenings ago. The right hon. Gentleman inferred that the island was an unhealthy place. He supposed the right hon. Gentleman formed that opinion from his memory of what occurred in 1878, when a wave of unhealthiness went over the whole of the Mediterranean, and our own island of Malta suffered terribly from fever. How could it be expected that Cyprus would be particularly healthy for the British troops when those who took them there had no knowledge as to the healthy and unhealthy parts of the island? It was well known that the troops were encamped on the low-lying plains which had achieved a bad and well-deserved reputation for unhealthiness. But as to the general healthiness of the island, Sir R. Lambert Playfair, an independent authority, wrote in 1890:—

> "The climate, in spite of all that has been said against it, is during the greater part of the year extremely healthy in almost all parts, and for a resident who is able to choose his quarters and move at will hardly a more perfect combination of warmth, dryness, brightness, and equability can be found than may be obtained by residing at Nikosia in the spring and autumn, Limasso in the winter, and Troodos in the summer. The extremely good health of the troops who live in camp from October to May, and on the cool slopes of Troodos from June to September is a proof of this."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer also said that crime had increased instead of diminished in Cyprus, and that the Bishop, who was over here lately, represented the condition of Cyprus as worse now than it had been under Turkish rule. But the last report from the High Commissioner of Cyprus said, in reference to the return of offences reported to the police:—

> "But when the returns are examined in detail, it appears that the greater part of this increase has occurred under the head of offences other than those classed as offences against the person and offences against property. Amongst these 'other offences' are included offences against the Revenue Laws, the Forest Laws,

the Field Watchman Laws, the Quarantine Laws, and breaches of Municipal By-laws. These offences cannot be regarded as crimes in the ordinary acceptation of the word; and it is the opinion of the Chief Justice that the criminal record of the year exhibits a decrease rather than an increase in the sum total of serious crime. In support of this conclusion, it is pointed out that the number of cases committed for trial before the Supreme Court is steadily declining."

Again, the Chief Justice, in his report dated 22nd June 1893, states:—

"The Return shows that the number of offences brought to the notice of the Courts during the period above mentioned was 6,617, a substantial increase over the figures of the preceding 12 months. In the year ending the 31st March 1892 the total number of such offences was 5,337, and it therefore appears that there has been an increase of about 24 per cent. in the number of offences reported to the Courts. The Return appears to be, and doubtless is, unsatisfactory; but I am glad to say that it is not so unsatisfactory as need appear to be the case at first sight, as I think that I shall be able to show, not only that there has been no increase of serious crime, but a very substantial decrease."

It was the opinion of persons who were well qualified to judge that some of the crime committed in Cyprus was owing to the fact that the people of the island found that the fruits of their labour went not into their own pockets, but into the taxation of the country, which was transferred to the Bank of England. The people said, "Why should we toil for England, or to make up this great subvention for England and France?" And instead of working, unfortunately, some of them took to the road. But the main grievance of Cyprus was the tribute that had to be paid by the people. The island was extremely poor; there were no rich people in it; its population was only a little over 200,000; and yet it produced a revenue of £180,000 a year, of which £93,000 went to pay the so-called Turkish tribute, but which was really spent by England and France in satisfying their indebtedness to Turkey under the Treaty of 1855. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that Cyprus was an unhappy speculation, as it had cost the British taxpayer about £500,000. But it was an undoubted fact that during the years we had occupied Cyprus the British and French taxpayers had got back £1,500,000. How could it be a bad speculation to get one and a half millions for half-a-million? The right hon. Gentleman also said that the administration of the island cost the British taxpayer £30,000 a year, and observed that it would be difficult for anyone to say what they got in return. France and England got nearly £93,000 a year in return for the grant in aid of £30,000. If it were not for the Cyprus tribute, France and England would be deprived of this £93,000 a year, and he would suggest to the Committee it was very hard that because Cyprus happened, in 1855, to be about a five-hundredth part of the Turkish Empire, that they, for the sake of their own pockets, and those of the French, should squeeze out of the island rather more than half of what remained of the indebtedness of the 1855 Loan. If they had not got this tribute from Cyprus and could not get it out of the Turks, then England and France, as joint guarantors of the 1855 Loan, would have to pay the money, and the effect of all this was that the people who benefited most by the tribute were the French, who were brought into the matter by an arrangement made in 1882. He did not suppose that before that time the French ever dreamed they were going to have any part or parcel of this Cyprus tribute. But the Government, finding they could not get the money out of the Turks, and being joint guarantors with the French of the 1855 Loan, decided to take the money out of Cyprus.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The hon. Member will see that if this money were not paid to the bondholders, it would not go under any circumstances to Cyprus. We are bound to pay it to the Turks, and we only intercept it for the creditors. If the money were not paid over to the creditors of the Turks it would be paid to the Turks.

*Mr. PIERPOINT was aware of this. He also knew that the Government of this country had, apparently, as far as he could judge, an absolutely strong technical case against the Porte, by which they could say to the Porte—

"This money, which was originally due to you, legally belongs to us and France as guarantors of the 1855 Loan. You will never see one penny of it; make an arrangement with us and we will pay you down a moderate sum of money simply to abrogate the one clause in the Convention of the 4th June which promises to the Porte the surplus revenues of Cyprus;"

which were eventually arranged to be

between £90,000 and £93,000 a year. But if the Government could say to the Porte, as they could—that the latter would never get one shilling of the Cyprus tribute and were to offer half-a-million of ready money paid down in lieu of it, surely the Porte would be willing to accept half-a-million. That money could be easily borrowed by Cyprus, and with interest at 3 per cent. and a sinking fund at 1 per cent., it would mean only £20,000 instead of nearly £100,000 a year.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Who is to pay the bondholders?

*Mr. PIERPOINT: What has Cyprus got to do with the bondholders? He asked, was Cyprus, because she was a little bit of the Turkish Empire when this debt was made, to go on for ages paying the debts of England and France? England and France entered into the arrangement of 1855 with the Turkish Government, so that they might carry on a war by the expenditure of Turkish lives instead of those of Englishmen and Frenchmen, and they lent the money in order that this might be effected. Cyprus formed part of the Turkish Empire at that time, and being the one little half-acre over which we had power now, one Government after another had squeezed that little half-acre until they had got this tribute from its people. The right hon. Gentleman had said that Cyprus was rather a squalid possession. It was the Government of this country who had made it a squalid possession by taking away from the islanders half of their revenue. Talk of absentee landlords! What absentee landlords took half the revenue of a whole country and spent it elsewhere? Cyprus paid nearly £93,000 a year, and England, after giving a grant in aid, made a profit out of Cyprus of between £15,000 and £20,000 a year, and France, who had nothing whatever to do with the matter, received £46,000 a year, which had actually to be met by taxation in Cyprus. Considerable credit was taken for the Government in Cyprus that they had got rid of the locusts. Locusts only came occasionally, but the Government came every year and took half of the revenue of the country, leaving not nearly sufficient to enable the resources of the island to be developed. The island was crying out for bridges, roads, irrigation, instruction in cultivation, and things of that sort, but all the Government said to them was, "You can have a Parliament." Accordingly a toy Parliament had been set up, but it was framed on such a basis as to make it a very questionable boon. Meanwhile the Government went on taking this revenue every year. The islanders were poor, but Cyprus was not a squalid possession. It was one of the most beautiful islands in the Mediterranean. It had a great past, it had been very rich, and it had great capabilities for the future if it were allowed to use them with some of the money taken away in this cruel manner every year. The right hon. Gentleman asked who was to pay the bondholders in respect of the 1855 loan if this tribute were not enforced? England and France ought to pay their own indebtedness, which they incurred for their own purposes. Surely something might be done to help the poor people of Cyprus, so that they might understand that the English flag meant freedom, and that the English flag and Government meant something like generosity. He was not asking for any great thing in taking the point of view of the people of Cyprus. What was it after all? It only meant a few thousands to a very rich country to enable a very poor country to make that progress they hoped and expected all their colonies and possessions to make. He was asking for common English justice and something like consideration for a struggling people.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) remarked that when the hon. Gentleman said that Cyprus was the most beautiful country in the world, and might be the richest, he had to reply that almost all these places could be made rich by an enormous expenditure of capital. He supposed that Cyprus was about as valuable as Uganda or any other of those absurd and ridiculous annexations which distinguished the present time. He rejoiced to hear the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the recent discussion, because there was a true and honest ring of anti-Jingoism about it which delighted him. The Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out that he was not responsible for what had taken place in Cyprus. England got Cyprus by one of the most infamous pieces of dirty trickery that ever distinguished a great country. There had been war between Turkey and Russia, and in order to prevent Russia acquiring any territory in Turkey, England went secretly to Turkey after the Berlin Convention, and told Turkey she should be supported if she would give to us what we claimed she ought not to give the Russians, and that was the way we got Peace with Honour. Peace with Cyprus! The acquisition of Cyprus formed only a portion of our Treaty with Turkey. We pledged ourselves to guarantee the integrity of the whole of Asia Minor on the condition that the people there were well and properly governed. That guarantee was a sham, and he put down all the astrocities now taking place in Armenia to that Peace with Honour Treaty of which hon. Gentlemen opposite were so exceedingly proud at the time. The only effect of the hon. Member's proposal was to make a present of half a million to Turkey; we should still have to pay the amount due upon the loan. The hon. Member must submit some plan which would cost this country a good deal less money. We sympathised with suffering humanity, but we were not prepared to pay for suffering humanity all over the globe. We had poor in England and had a great deal to do with our money. He had a more practical plan. The 1855 loan was borrowed at 4 per cent. upon the guarantee of France and England. The Turks gave as special securities the Egyptian tribute and the customs of Smyrna and Syria; and they paid the sinking fund and interest until 1875. At that time £1,177,000 of the bonds had been redeemed. The debt consequently then stood in round figures at £3,800,000. Since then there had been drawings each year, but the bonds drawn had not been redeemed. The holders had not insisted on being paid, for the excellent reason that the bonds stood at 112. The bonds so drawn amounted to £2,695,000, leaving a balance of little over a million. His suggestion was, that they should borrow this £2,695,000 at 3 per cent. and thus save £25,000 a year, which was nearly equivalent to the amount of grant in aid to Cyprus.

Sir W. HARCOURT: If you reduce the amount due to the creditors the balance must go to Turkey.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that some arrangement must be made with Turkey on the subject. He would remind hon. Gentlemen that Cyprus was not a British possession; it was a portion of the Turkish Empire, and we had only a lease of it. There was another island in the same sea, the island of Samos, which enjoyed autonomy, and paid a certain tribute. It seemed to him it might easily be arranged that we should, concurrently with the adoption of the suggestion he had made for the reduction of the interest, give up the lease of Cyprus, and that Cyprus should secure some sort of autonomy such as was enjoyed by the islanders of Samos. By that means we should do good to ourselves, to the Cypriote and, to a certain extent, to the Turk himself. He moved a reduction of the Vote by £100, in order to make a protest that nothing had been done to reduce our indebtedness in this matter. No doubt, Cyprus might, by a large expenditure of money, be made wealthy. But we did not take Cyprus in order to make it wealthy by draining or anything of that sort. Lord Beaconsfield said that our object was to make it a place of arms. But no one could say that it would be of any advantage as a place of arms, or that its harbour was of any possible use. And no one pretended that it could be made a sanatorium. It was perfectly and absolutely useless at the present time. ["No, no!"] No! It had a use. Let it be an object-lesson to hon. Gentlemen opposite not to annex islands of this sort. Let them remember what their dalliance with the Cypriotes had cost us. Let them in future spend the money of this country at home instead of seeking to gain territory by trickery, fraud, and force, and then to boast that they had increased the glory and the dignity of the British Empire.

***Mr. J. W. LOWTHER** (Cumberland, Penrith) said, the financial question depended on the point of view from which they regarded it, and he maintained that the British taxpayer had been a considerable gainer by the lease we had had of the island. Admitting that the subsidies which the House had had to vote averaged £30,000 a year, we had practically taken £92,000 a year from Cyprus for the payment of the interest of the Turkish Guaranteed Loan of 1855.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Does the hon. Gentleman include in that the proportion paid by France.

*Mr. J. W. LOWTHER said, he was very doubtful whether France paid any of that sum—he had not been able to trace any payments by France in that respect. If we had not received that money, we should have had to raise a considerable portion of the sum required every year for the service of the loan.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I can now give the exact figure. The sum that we should have had to provide, supposing Turkey had provided nothing, and taking into account that France is responsible for one-half of the whole liability, and gets the benefit of discharge from that liability every year, is exactly £40,876 per annum.

*Mr. J. W. LOWTHER said, that being so, we should have to provide, in order to meet our liability every year—the Porte having made default—a sum of £40,876. That figure reduced no doubt considerably the figures which he had in his mind, but it still left a considerable surplus. Assuming the amounts of our subsidies in aid to have averaged £30,000 a year, we had received from the revenues of Cyprus £10,876 a year, being the difference between £40,876 and £30,000. Therefore, from the point of view of the British taxpayer, so far from the occupation of Cyprus having cost us anything at all, it had, in fact, relieved the British taxpayer to the extent of £10,876 a year. The hon. Member for Warrington (Mr. Pierpoint) had pleaded rather in the capacity of a representative of the people of Cyprus than as a Member of the British Parliament; but, from the point of view of the Cypriotes themselves, he would like to ask whether they are not better off now, under the British administration, than they were, before the year 1878, under Turkish rule? He did not think there could be a doubt as to the answer. The Cyprians' position had been enormously improved, and justice was well and fairly administered. He would like to quote to the Committee one passage from the important letter addressed to *The Times* on the 14th instant. Speaking as a former High Commissioner in Cyprus, Sir Henry Bulwer stated as follows:—

> "We have conferred on the Island the solid benefits of a pure administration of justice and of an honest and impartial administration of Executive Government. In the preservation of the forests, in the promotion of education, in the establishment of hospitals and dispensaries, in the construction of roads, in the improvement of harbour accommodation, in works of irrigation, in the security given against the scourge of locusts (though the cost of this work, it should be stated, is defrayed by a special tax, and not out of general revenue)—in these and in other ways the Government has done what it could to promote the present welfare of the country, and to guard its future interests. The general condition of the people has improved. They have now comforts and conveniences of life to which they were formerly strangers. The value of the trade of the Island increased from £532,000 in 1879 to £776,000 in 1891."

He could go on showing that, not only had these substantial improvements been derived from the English rule in Cyprus, but, in addition to that, taxation had been considerably reduced since our advent.

Sir W. HARCOURT: New taxes have been imposed.

*Mr. J. W. LOWTHER said, there had been more remitted than had been newly imposed. Could anyone doubt that the Cypriotes were in a better position now than they were in 1878? If a poll of the inhabitants of the Island were taken upon the question whether they would rather remain under British rule, or go back and be under the direct administration of the Sublime Porte, there was, he believed, very little doubt as to the answer the Cypriotes would return.

Colonel BRIDGEMAN (Bolton) said, that, according to the figure now given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the cost of the interest on our share of the liability under the Turkish loan of 1855 amounted to £694,892. Against that we paid £494,000, and England had, consequently, benefited to the extent of over £200,000 by the occupation of the Island.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I do my sum a little more simply. We have received the benefit of our remission of our liability, say, £40,000 a year. We have paid, say, £30,000 a year. The difference is £10,000. Multiply that by 17 years, and I make that £170,000.

Colonel BRIDGEMAN said, that came very nearly to what he had stated.

The UNDER SECRETARY for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar), interposing, said that the difference was the amount on the Estimates for 1894.

Colonel BRIDGEMAN said, that he had taken his figures from an answer given by the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square (Mr. Goschen) on July 2, 1889. He wished to give these figures because he thought it was unfair to talk about Cyprus as a "squalid possession," when we had put into our own pockets about £200,000 out of its revenues. He admitted, however, that France had had the better bargain, because she had not only profited to the same extent as ourselves, but had been saved from paying the grants in aid which we had been called upon for. He hoped that they would never again hear Cyprus spoken of in the terms used that afternoon.

*Sir D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyll) desired the Committee to look at the matter from another point of view—namely, the aspect of the offensive and defensive alliance between this country and Turkey. On our taking over Cyprus the Porte agreed to reform the administration in Armenia, and, in consideration of that condition, we were to give her armed assistance, if necessary, to uphold the integrity of Armenia. It had been shown, he admitted to his surprise, that Cyprus had been a profit to us in a money sense, but he did not think we had gained honour in gaining money. The question he desired to put was whether, at this moment, England was liable to give armed assistance to Turkey in case of an invasion of Armenia by Russia. He contended that, if we were not prepared to fulfil that condition, we ought, in common decency, to withdraw from Cyprus. When we went there it was for a particular object, and upon a specific understanding. It was perfectly well known that the Porte had not carried out its portion of the agreement. It had not administered Armenia in the way that England intended that it should be administered. He asked whether, if the Commission reported proving—as he had no doubt it would report—that the atrocities had been committed in Armenia, the Government would denounce this Treaty and at the same time give Cyprus back to the Turks. The island was of no value to us. Then let us give it back to the Turks, as we were no longer willing to fulfil the conditions originally undertaken. Was there in the House or in the country a man who would go to war with Russia in order to maintain Turkish rule in Armenia? The Member for King's Lynn was not easily terrified, but he doubted whether he would be willing to advocate that policy. If they were not ready to do that they had no right to maintain their rule over Cyprus.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have listened with great astonishment to the views of hon. Gentlemen like the hon. Member who has just sat down when they were recalling reminiscences in connection with the Eastern question. The hon. Member for Northampton and others have taxed their memories to recall some few features of the speeches made between 1878 and 1880 on the iniquities and enormities of the Government which made the arrangement as to Cyprus.

*Sir D. MACFARLANE: I made no charges. I said there was much to be said in favour of the policy in which it originated.

Mr. BALFOUR: I thought the hon. Member said that it was dishonourable.

*Sir D. MACFARLANE: I said the retention would be dishonourable.

Mr. BALFOUR: The hon. Member for Northampton certainly made an attack upon Lord Beaconsfield's Government which answers to that description—an attack less relevant to the Vote I cannot imagine. What did he say? He said that he has discovered to his dismay that Cyprus is a profitable investment. He said he was astonished to find that we make a profit out of it. The ground then was cut from under his feet. According to the Treaty we were endeavouring to give the Turkish Government the strongest inducements to reform their rule in Asia Minor. It is not my business to form any estimate as to how that has been carried out. I leave that to others. At all events, in making that Treaty we did as much as, or more than, was done by any Government before or subsequent to Lord Beaconsfield's Government. We gave the Porte substantial, direct, and obvious motives in the matter. Let me tell hon. Members that if we have not gained the object we had in view we are much less likely to gain it by the course suggested. The hon. Member thinks that we are bound in honour to hand over Cyprus, our obligations being to defend Asia Minor, provided the Porte extended there that good government which we all desire to see extended in the Ottoman Empire. If that was done there would be no reluctance on our part to carry out any part of the obligations. The hon. Member made an appeal to the Government on the subject of Armenia, and at the very moment that he was appealing to the Government to interfere on behalf of Armenia he desires to hand back the population of Cyprus to Turkey. Was there ever an inconsistency like that?

*SIR D. MACFARLANE: I never appealed to the Government to interfere with Armenia. I ask them to retire from Cyprus.

MR. BALFOUR: I certainly understood him to say that, while we ought not to go to war, we ought to make representations to the Porte.

*SIR D. MACFARLANE: Oh, yes!

MR. BALFOUR: He wishes the Government to threaten the Porte with regard to these reforms in Armenia, and at the same time hand back the population of Cyprus, which at present enjoys all the blessings of Western government, to Turkey. I cannot understand who it is that is injured by the present condition of things. My hon. Friend near me has pointed out that the British taxpayer is not injured, and the Cyprians are not injured by it. These are the two chief parties to be considered, and if they have both benefited I see no reason why we should have any change such as is suggested by the Motion. As regards the strategic value of Cyprus, I will not say a word beyond this. Some hon. Members talk as if we now knew what the end of that great and complex drama, the Eastern question, will be. But without such knowledge as to the development in the future, it may be in the near future, of the Eastern question, he would be a rash prophet, and he would be a reckless politician, who would say that Cyprus would not prove to be of great importance. Whether that will be the case or not I do not venture to say, but it would be perfect insanity on the part of this House or any Government, not knowing what the future may bring forth, to drop out of an arrangement which at the present moment is a benefit to Cyprus and to the British taxpayer. For these reasons I do earnestly hope that the Member for Northampton will not press his Motion to a Division, and will not give an opportunity to the smallest minority to express an opinion in a rash moment that this arrangement ought to be brought to a termination.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I entirely agree that it is not desirable that we should discuss on this Vote the whole of the Eastern question. I have carefully abstained, and I hope hon. Members will carefully abstain, on the present occasion from raising that other question—namely, the obligations which this country has entered into with Turkey, and how far those obligations are binding on one side when they are not fulfilled on the other. This is too grave a question to raise on a small Vote in Supply. It is a question pregnant with serious consequences, and I would strongly deprecate raising a question of that kind now—a question which to a great extent is *sub judice*. The question how far Turkey has fulfilled its share of the obligations is being examined into now in Asia Minor, and I would venture to urge on the Committee that this is a question which it is not now wise to pursue. With reference to the question of Cyprus that is comparatively a narrow one. The fact is what was done in 1878 with regard to the island was done in a great hurry. No inquiry was made as to what the profits were that Turkey made out of Cyprus. [An hon. MEMBER: "There was the Commission."] Yes, there was the Commission, but the Commission did not report for two years after we got Cyprus—not until 1880. I have got the figures here, but at the time there was mere speculation. In my opinion it was an unfortunate thing that we should take the thing in order to pay it over to some one else. The members of the Deputation who came over from Cyprus made the loudest complaints of the Administration. They alleged that they were much better off before than after Cyprus was taken over by England, but I never accepted that

Surely you did not expect, when you went to Cyprus, that you were going to squeeze as much out of the Cypriotes as the Turks had been able to squeeze? As I have said, that was the foundation of the bargain, and I think it was an unfortunate bargain. But, on the other hand, when the hon. Member for Warrington comes forward and says:—

> "Oh! let us go to the Turks and get out of this bargain, and let us pay the whole of the interest on the 1855 loan,"

I can only wish that he occupied my place as Chancellor of the Exchequer,

*Mr. PIERPOINT: I did not suggest that we should give the Porte half-a-million of money. I suggested that Cyprus should borrow it on the credit of England.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Then what is going to become of the interest on the 1855 loan? I could not entertain for a moment the financial transactions recommended by the hon. Member, because they would be extremely hard on the English taxpayer. When hon. Members say that we are a very rich country, they should also remember that there are a good many persons here who find their burdens to be as heavy as they can bear; and that we should be asked to call upon them now, when the taxation of the country is at a higher point than it has ever reached in this country, to take a share in redeeming the bargain of 1878, is a proposal which I, for one, could not entertain. That is the amount of the criticism which I have made on the transaction of 1878. I said that we ought never to have undertaken to pay this sum of money. The hon Member who spoke last said I had described Cyprus as a "squalid possession." I did not mean by that phrase to refer to the profits made out of it by England, but to the result of the profits. The fact of taking one half of its revenue and diverting it to other purposes—into the pockets of the Turks, the bond-holders, or the guarantors of the loan of 1855—reduced your resources for the good government and the development of Cyprus to such narrow limits that you would have, in that sense, a "squalid possession." It is in the position of an estate which has one half of its income under mortgage. Naturally, that estate is an unfortunate possession, and that is exactly what happened in the case of Cyprus, and must continue to happen unless you are prepared to impose on the English ratepayer the burden of redeeming that mortgage. That is the condition of things, and to that extent I made my criticism upon it. I have never, however, proposed the abandonment of Cyprus. I do not see, in existing circumstances, how we are to retire from the obligations into which we have entered to the people of Cyprus. I have never proposed to hand Cyprus over to Turkey. I should be sorry to hand over any population. I know there have been proposals with regard to other portions of the East, but I have been opposed to them. As regards strategical value, I have always understood that you should concentrate rather than disperse your points and your forces. It was on that account Lord Palmerston gave up Corfu and the Ionian Islands. He thought that by having Malta we should be stronger than we would be if called upon to defend two places. Therefore, looking to the obligations we have entered into, we must perform them as best we can, and, in the circumstances, I think that what has been done was the best that could be done in the circumstances in which we took over Cyprus.

*Mr T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, the right hon. Gentleman need not ask himself whether he could leave Cyprus. He could leave it as a former Liberal Government had left the Ionian Islands. Nay, it was provided that we should leave Cyprus in a certain eventuality. The Convention put us under an absolute obligation in that respect. Cyprus was a portion of the Ottoman Empire, which England held on a lease, determinable at the pleasure of Russia, for the Convention provided that if at any time Russia should give back to Turkey Kars, Ardahan, and Batoum, England should evacuate Cyprus, and the Convention should be at an end. This question of Cyprus, he submitted, was not to be argued on financial grounds, or even on the ground of the prosperity and happiness of the Cypriotes. Cyprus was acquired wholly as a strategical measure. The statesman who thought it worth while to acquire Cyprus foresaw that a considerable change might take place in the relative importance of the Levant ports. Take Salonica for example. It was destined to become one of the great points in the world's highway, and in order to provide for that and other changes he acquired Cyprus with the purpose of making it a *place d'armes*, as great a citadel almost as Gibraltar, to be provided with harbours and docks and with a *corps d'armée*, always ready to act on the flank of any possible advance along Syria towards the Suez Canal. Before they judged, therefore, whether it was wise or unwise to acquire Cyprus or to retain it, they must surely consider this important factor in the question, that the original purpose had never been carried out. Cyprus had not been made a *place d'armes*, and it possessed no harbour, only a few anchorages in exposed bays open to the south-east gales which prevail in winter. The Cyprus Convention only entitled this country to ask for "necessary reforms, to be agreed upon between England and Turkey, and those were the conditions that were brought forward by Armenian conspirators in the interest of Russia, both in Armenia and in England. The bargain was, that we were to make, and we did make, an offensive and defensive alliance with Turkey as to the Asiatic defence of Turkey, and in order to enable us to carry out this alliance we occupied Cyprus. But he did not see how the possession of Cyprus would enable us to carry out that policy. Supposing we were going to defend the Asiatic frontier of Turkey from an advance by Russia, how would the soldiers be sent? Not to Cyprus. Were we to attempt to reach the Asiatic frontier of Turkey from Cyprus soldiers would have to cross the Taurus range of mountains, and this would take months to effect. Any Army for the defence of the Asiatic frontier of Turkey, must be sent by sea through the Bosphorus. But Cyprus was a thousand miles from Malta and about a thousand from the Bosphorus, more or less, and if they wished to defend the Asiatic shores of Turkey it would be much easier to send soldiers direct from Malta (distant itself only about 1,000 miles from the Bosphorus) than round by Cyprus, thus adding 2,000 miles to the voyage. As to the strategical position of Cyprus, he was out of harmony with a great many of his friends. He thought that the possession of Cyprus tended inevitably to cut our Mediterranean Fleet into two squadrons, one of which was obliged to keep east of Cape Matapan. It put a thousand miles between the two halves of our Mediterranean fleet. The effect of that might be most serious in the event of a sudden outbreak of war, therefore he confessed himself an entire heretic as to the strategical claims of Cyprus. If the purpose for which it had been originally intended had been carried out he admitted it would have been of some value, but at present it was only mischievous. If by fair means we could acquire important strategical positions, he was not adverse to a little British aggression. He could show them stations in the Mediterranean which would be far more valuable to us than Cyprus, such as Crete, Mitylene, or Mahon in Minorca. He should not object if by fair means we could obtain possession of one of these posts, but during the 17 years we had possessed Cyprus we had been halting between two opinions. If we kept Cyprus it must be for strategical purposes alone, and not to secure either the interests of the bondholders or the happiness of the Cypriotes. He urged that the island should either be made a *place d'armes*, and the harbours and other works, costly though they would be, should be completed, or it should be given up altogether.

MR. T. W. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton), said the right hon. Gentleman had, at all events, until quite recently, been the idol of the Little Englanders. The right hon. Gentleman never, he thought, enjoyed himself so sincerely as when he was denouncing any accession to the Empire, or advocating some contraction of it. The right hon. Gentleman's speech on Friday had consisted in large measure of a denunciation of the policy of the Conservative party in going to Cyprus at all. He expressed himself dissatisfied at the fact that the island cost us a large sum annually. He stated it was a useless island, and positively exulted, with almost indecent pleasure, at a statement made, he believed, on the authority of a bishop, that the island was in a worse condition now than it was when it formed part of the Turkish possessions, and he excused himself for not withdrawing on the ground that it was easier to get into a place than to get out of it. He would make an amicable suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman to help him out of his difficulty. The original reason for our occupation of Cyprus, it appeared to him, had been more or less lost sight of, and many people were under the impression that we went there to benefit the Armenians. We went there, of course, to obtain an equivalent for Russian aggression on Turkey, and if Russia would restore to Turkey Kars and her other conquests in Armenia during the late war, the Island of Cyprus might be evacuated by England. They were told that Lord Rosebery had established a new *entente cordiale* with Russia; here, then, was an opportunity of putting it to the test. He did not believe the most hardened Jingo would oppose the evacuation under such circumstances. The right hon. Gentleman had not been able to show that we had lost money by the bargain, and he was not going to accept his opinion that the island was worthless from a military point of view. He did not see why it should not be just as prosperous as any other Colony if it was treated in a fair manner. Finally, no European Power would believe that we were going to leave Cyprus, but would believe that the right hon. Gentleman's statement was a cloak for some insidious design to acquire a more valuable possession in Eastern waters.

*Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry), said the question had been discussed from the point of view of the English taxpayers and of the Treasury, not from the standpoint of the Cyprus taxpayers. He was quite sure the Colonial Office had always been inclined to act fairly and liberally towards Cyprus, but the Treasury had always been forcing them to treat it a little more harshly than any other Colony. The terms of our acquisition were, not that Cyprus should pay £93,000 a year, but that England should pay it; but no sooner had the English Government accepted this obligation than they placed the sum upon the revenues of Cyprus. This was the only Colony or Dependency which we treated in this way. It was a singular instance of the unfair treatment which England exercised in the case of a very small State. Having unfairly extracted £93,000 from Cyprus, and agreed that the money should be paid to the Porte, we next stopped the tribute *in transitu* on its way to Constantinople and it was paid to England. When it came here, half was paid over to France. What had France done for Cyprus that the unfortunate Cypriotes should pay a tribute to France of £42,000 a year? It was a hardship on the Cypriotes and on the English taxpayer. Since 1883, roughly speaking, the taxpayers of Cyprus had paid into the English Treasury £700,000, and of this £420,000 had gone to France, to relieve the French taxpayer of the £42,000 a year which they were bound to pay under the guarantee of the Turkish loan of 1855. He thought that by capitalising the tribute in some way the Cypriotes might be relieved of this undue taxation, and we might place what was truly and honestly an English obligation on English shoulders. Whoever heard of their dealing with any other Colony in this way? Sir Henry Holland said that England made a profit out of Cyprus. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) put it more mildly by saying that it was true that England obtained an incidental benefit from Cyprus, and remarked that three courses were open to the Government—either England and France might pay the interest themselves, or they might seize the revenue, which the Turkish Government gave as security, or they might transfer their obligations to Cyprus. They had taken the last course. Two or three years ago, in reply to a question in the House, he was informed that £77,000 had accumulated in the English Treasury from Cyprus. The Cypriotes had never been asked whether they would pay, they were compelled by the superior force of England. He readily admitted that the affairs of Cyprus had been ably administered by this country, and he contended that Cyprus would be one of the most flourishing of our dependencies if only allowed to use its own revenue for its own purposes.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said, the length of this Debate—in fact, the Debate itself—was entirely due to the remarkable speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer last

Friday week. The right hon. Gentleman then made a very different speech from that which he had made now. The Chancellor of the Exchequer on the former occasion must have forgotten himself. The right hon. Gentleman saw before him the shade of Lord Beaconsfield, and he thought there was an opportunity of attacking the memory of that great man without reply. So he made rash statements and insinuations which recalled some of his reckless speeches of 15 years ago. Those statements had not been repeated that evening by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had tried to explain away almost everything he said on that Friday night. [Sir W. HARCOURT: "No, no!"] Evidently the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not remember what he had said. A more absurd explanation never had been heard in the House of Commons than that, when he described Cyprus as a "squalid" possession, he only referred to the tribute paid to Turkey. His whole speech last Friday week was directed to proving that Cyprus was a worthless and useless possession, and that the possession of Cyprus had cost England an enormous sum of money. It had been demonstrated to the right hon. Gentleman that he was quite wrong in both his propositions. [Sir W. HARCOURT: "No, no!"] Apparently the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not any definite views upon this subject whatever. On Friday week he saw a chance of attacking the memory of Lord Beaconsfield. On the present occasion, when he found himself confronted with a more serious Opposition, and had probably read the criticisms which both the English and Foreign Press had passed on his remarks, he made a much more prudent speech. The only logical conclusion to his former speech was an immediate evacuation of Cyprus. There had been speakers who had tried, since the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to make out that Cyprus had not improved under British Administration. That was a proposition so baseless that it hardly required refutation. The trade of Cyprus Sir Henry Bulwer had shown had improved since 1879 by 50 per cent. In the face of that could they say that the island was a decaying island, and had suffered by British Administration? The population had increased by 25,000, and that again was not a sign of decaying prosperity. Sir Henry Bulwer, whose knowledge of Cyprus was unique, went on to give other evidences of prosperity. He showed that the cereal production of Cyprus had nearly doubled since the occupation by England. The production of wine had greatly increased, there was a preservation of forests, a purer administration of justice, and an honest and moral Administration by the Executive Government. Surely these facts disproved the arguments of the Mover of this reduction, and also the former statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The most extraordinary point about the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement ten days since, was, that he actually complained to the House Cyprus had cost this country £450,000, and he did not say a word about the fact that Cyprus had paid, by way of interest on the loan of 1879, a sum of no less than £1,500,000. Imagine the Leader of a great Party and the responsible Minister in that House, making such an unfair and one-sided statement. It was only pardonable on the supposition that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he spoke, was not informed as to the real facts. Even if they deducted the French half of the guarantee received—and he was not so sure that they ought to deduct it, as the guarantee was a "joint and several" one to bear the whole loss, and, if France refused to pay, England would have to bear the whole loss—the gain to this country had been £200,000. In the face of that fact the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was too fantastic and inaccurate to require much refutation. It was possible, too, that in certain contingencies Cyprus might possess great strategic value. We did not occupy it owing to the caprice of a Prime Minister, but because the highest military authorities in this country recommended that it should be occupied in view of its value in the future. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that Alexandria was a much better position to hold; and the only logical conclusion to draw from that remark was that our occupation of Alexandria would be permanent. But when Cyprus was occupied we had no footing in Egypt, Cyprus was of distinct value as covering the approaches to the Suez Canal.

There were three important positions in the Mediterranean, the occupation of which would ensure to a great Naval Power practical supremacy in that sea —Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus. If Cyprus had not been made use of hitherto it did not follow that it could not be or would not be used. A valuable harbour might be made there, and, if we had the men and the money, it might be made a great place of arms; but it did not follow that it was of no value because a harbour had not yet been made and the troops were not actually there. When railways were made in Asia Minor they must touch the Mediterranean under the lee of Cyprus, which would then become a very important place. There were many schemes for opening up to the sea the vast wealth of Asia Minor and the matchlessly fertile valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates. Wherever these railways found their terminus—at Tripoli or Alexandretta, or some adjacent port — Cyprus would completely command the harbours and the trade that passed through them. As the Leader of the Opposition had reminded them, the Eastern Question could not be regarded as settled. Events might move more rapidly than some expected; and a critical situation easily might arise in which it would be all-important that we should be in possession of a dominant point commanding these portions of Asia Minor. If these events should happen the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be the first to be obliged to recall the rash denial he had given to the value of Cyprus to this country.

Mr. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.) suggested that the Amendment for the reduction of the Vote should be withdrawn, and that the Committee should divide on the whole Vote, in which case he should be happy to vote with his hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere).

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, he was a moderate man, and proposed to strike off only £100, but, if his hon. Friend preferred to take off £29,000, by all means let them vote for that.

Sir W. HARCOURT suggested that opposition to the Vote should be withdrawn altogether, for surely no one could wish that the unfortunate Cypriots, who, in his opinion, got too little already, should have nothing at all; that would be an unworthy wish on the part of any Member, unless, indeed, we were going to evacuate Cyprus at once. As we were not going to do so, we had no alternative but to vote the very moderate provision that was necessary to carry on the administration.

***Sir C. W. DILKE** (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said that, whether the course now proposed to be taken by the opponents of the Vote was worthy or unworthy, it was precisely the course taken on a former occasion, when the Members of the present Government divided against the whole Vote and the Chancellor of the Exchequer walked out rather than support his colleagues.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 246; Noes, 29.—(Division List, No. 30.)

Vote agreed to.

On the Supplementary Vote £24,000, Superannuation and Retiring Allowances.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) took the opportunity to refer to the grievances of Major Farquharson, late Governor of Portland Convict Prison, whose retiring pension had been reduced by £75 through no fault of his own. If he had but to rely on the consideration of the Secretary to the Treasury he would have good hope of gaining his point, but the right hon. Gentleman could not act in his individual capacity; he was governed by the rules of the Treasury. But the case was one of such exceptional hardship that there was a claim to have it dealt with in an exceptional manner, and this gallant officer should be relieved from a disability which pressed upon him very hardly. Major Farquharson was appointed Governor of the Prison in 1865, on the distinct understanding that he should on the completion of his term retire with two-thirds of his salary as pension as prescribed by the Superannuation Act. But there came out an Order in Council for compulsory retirement at the age of 65, and by this Major Farquharson lost £75 a year. With the Order in Council he found no fault, for the State had a right to insist on the retirement of its officers at any time and at any age the State might think fit; but what he did find fault with was the inequality meted out to officers in two departments. The State could dictate its terms, but it should take care that vested interests were effectually guarded before enforcing an order for compulsory retirement. In the old local prisons governors were allowed to serve on without limit of age provided they were pronounced judicially fit for duty. That showed that the intention was not to apply the rule of compulsory retirement to prison governors; and that to withhold the exception from convict prison governors was unjust. The local prison governors were protected by Act of Parliament; the convict prison governors were not; and this arose from no fault of their own, but simply through the neglect of the Home Office. This unfortunate and small body of gentlemen were left unprotected by this Act, and this old officer was penalised to the extent of £75 a year. Major Farquharson, who had always been in Her Majesty's Service, was in a worse position than those who came under Her Majesty's Government in 1878. He was quite willing and able to serve and complete his full term, but he was not allowed to do that, and he was not allowed the full pension in the hope of which he came into the Service originally. Certainly the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments did not intend the age clause to refer to gentlemen in this position, nor would it apply if the Home Office had put the convict prison governors on an equality with the governors of local prisons. Major Farquharson had been in correspondence with the Department and the answer was an expression of regret, but that it could not be helped; for, while local governors were protected by Act, convict governors were not. There must surely be some other reason, for the two services were identical; and he asked that this officer should be granted his two-thirds penson. The money required to pay these officers on the footing he claimed for them would not be a large sum for these men. He believed only three other officers would suffer under the order for compulsory retirement. As a matter of fact the order for compulsory retirements had never been enforced in the Prisons Department, and officers were allowed to serve for the term entitling them to a pension of two-thirds of their salary. They could not enter until 24, while ordinary Civil servants entered much later, and in the Army and Navy officers obtained better pay and allowances. Major Farquharson suffered from no fault of his own, but simply through the neglect of the Home Office. He was an old officer in Her Majesty's Service, without influential friends, and he earnestly pressed his claim, for relief from the disability which deprived him of £75 a year, upon the Treasury.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) said, that he had no fault to find with the hon. and gallant Member for bringing forward this case. He felt great sympathy for Major Farquharson, and was sorry that under the regulations it had been necessary to treat him in the way described by the hon. and gallant Gentleman. Local prison governors were protected by the Act of Parliament relating to the transfer of prisons from the municipalities to the State. Under that Act all their former rights and privileges were ensured to them after the transference. That was the reason why local prison governors were in a better position than Major Farquharson. One of the difficulties in the way of treating his case exceptionally was that if that were done it would be necessary to extend the same treatment to various civil servants in other Government departments. Major Farquharson had completed 29 years' service, and in estimating his pension five years had been added to his service, so that when he retired he received 34–60ths of his pay. By the addition of these five years to his service he had got a certain advantage. He was sorry that he had no power to effect any amelioration in Major Farquharson's position. It had been suggested by the Home Office that the case might be one for a special pension, but it was no longer the custom to grant special pensions, so the case could not be met in that way. If it had been possible to make any special arrangement in favour of Major Farquharson he should have been only too glad, for Major Farquharson had been a most excellent officer, and had done much good work.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD asked whether such special terms could be granted to Major Farquharson as were given when an office was abolished.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT thought that abolition terms could not be granted, because the retirement of Major Farquharson was due not to the abolition of the prison, but to the fact that he had reached the age of 65. If a distinction were made in his case a similar distinction would have to be made in a great number of other cases.

Colonel LOCKWOOD asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would do something for Major Farquharson if an opportunity should present itself—if there should be an opening.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT promised to entertain the idea.

Mr. HANBURY asked why the scale of Diplomatic pensions was so high. He saw that a Consul-General (Sir W. L. Booker) was retiring on a pension of £1,266, which was a great deal more than was given to Civil Servants of the highest grades in other departments of work. Another official was compensated on a still more extravagant scale. The Solicitor to the Treasury, who had entered the service of the Government late in life, and who had received a good salary during his eight or 10 years' service, had retired with a pension of £1,750. They wanted information with regard to the compensation allowance of £2,250 to be paid to the executors of the late J. Wainewright, a taxing-master of the Supreme Court. He should also like an explanation of the gratuities of £600, £500, and £750 for three officials of the Local Government Board, the Board of Agriculture, and the Home Office. He did not understand why these items should appear under this Vote. Surely it was known at the beginning of a year that certain officials were likely to retire during that year. He wished also to be told what was the rule with regard to pensions in the case of members of the Civil Service and Diplomatic Service, who, after retirement, took up other posts which were more or less of an official nature. There was, for example, the case of Sir Rivers Wilson, who was drawing a pension of £950 and also a salary as a member of the Board of the Suez Canal. Was there not a rule providing for the diminution of pensions in the case of officials transferred to new posts actually in the military, naval, or Civil Service? If there was, the same rule ought to apply to officials who took semi-official employment. It was a question how far the Government were in the right in reducing the pensions of officials who, after retirement, were appointed to other posts. The hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Burns) had drawn attention to the case of retired non-commissioned officers and others who were in Government employment in civil capacities, and who received lower wages than they otherwise would on account of the pensions which they enjoyed. The Labour Members objected strongly to this practice on the ground that it had a tendency to lower wages. If the Secretary of State for War and other Ministers were going to accede to the views of the Labour Members, and if neither the pensions of these men nor their salaries were to be reduced in future, it would certainly be contended that the same principle ought to apply to retired officers and to the civil servants of the Crown. He thought that one result of the controversy would be that in future, when a man was granted a pension; it would be on the assumption that he was not qualified for further public service.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT stated, in reply, that it was impossible to say, when the Estimates were prepared, what number of officials or persons entitled to pension would retire during the year. There were numerous instances in the list. He might name Lord Welby, Secretary to the Treasury, and so it was with the majority of other cases. He believed it had always been the case that there had been Supplementary Estimates for pensions and allowances of this kind. He was glad the hon. Member had drawn attention to one case—the compensation allowance to the executors of James Wainewright, a taxing-master. That was a remarkable case, and it might be looked at as an object-lesson. In the year 1842, more than 50 years ago, the Act 5 & 6 Vict. cap. 103, was passed, at the time when Mr. Wainewright was a sworn clerk in Chancery. The office was abolished by Section 1 of that Act, and by Section 12 he was compensated for the abolition of his office, and the amount of the compensation was fixed by the then Lord Chancellor at

£4,500 5s. 1d. per annum. This represented three-fourths of his emoluments, which amounted to £6,000 6s. 9d. The gentleman died on September 27, 1893. It might have been supposed that the considerable sum he had received during his lifetime would have been considered sufficient, probably, to compensate him even for the abolition of his office. But there was another step. Section 14 of the Act went on to provide that one-half of the named compensation—namely, £2,250 2s. 6d., should be payable to his executors for seven years from the time of his death as "part of his personal estate."

MR. HANBURY: Is this to be an absolute payment for seven years?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Yes, from the time of his death, under the Act of Parliament.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): There is no option?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: We have no option. It might be asked, why was this not put into the Estimates last year? The answer was, that the attention of the Treasury was not drawn to the matter until October 20, 1894, or else provision would have been made in the original Estimate of 1894–5. This was a case the Committee really ought to ponder upon, taking some comfort, perhaps, from the reflection that it could not possibly occur in our time. With regard to gratuities, his hon. Friend might be satisfied that the Treasury looked very closely into every case; but as to the pensions, of course, they could neither be increased nor reduced, being regulated according to the number of years' service.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N. E.) was of opinion that the scale of pensions was defensible. The interests of this country were so complex and varied that we certainly required to pay our representatives abroad highly. As a French diplomatist of the highest rank once told him: "This country was exceedingly wise to grant liberal pensions to its Consuls."

Vote agreed to.

On the Vote of £14,000 for Temporary Commissions,

Sir J. T. Hibbert.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) asked for information with regard to the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT stated that the Commission was still continuing its work and reported from year to year. As the result of strong pressure brought to bear on the Government a sum of £250 was taken for the purposes of a descriptive catalogue of Welsh manuscripts, the Commission having agreed to give £150 for the services of a Welsh-speaking assistant.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) made some remarks on the Agricultural Commission, and said there was a consensus of opinion in the Eastern Counties that part of the evidence taken before the Commission was absolutely futile and a waste of time and money. A gentleman came before the Commission and said he had been able to grow wheat to the extent of 16 quarters to the acre. The statement was absolutely ridiculous and absurd; if he had grown 3½ quarters to the acre he had done very well. The witness went on to say that a thousand millions of money might be well spent on land in England. Other evidence was given to the effect that derelict farms might be let for 20s. an acre, whereas it was perfectly well known that the whole lot of those farms were not worth 20s. altogether. The reason for producing this evidence was simply to show that agriculturists were always crying "Wolf!" and that agriculture was not in a very bad way at all. Everyone knew what was the cause of agricultural depression without being told by a Royal Commission. It was low prices and high taxes. He had in his possession a sample of English wheat at 18s. a quarter, which was very much less than the price of bath-brick, though that was not edible. He should not be doing his duty to his constituents if he did not move a reduction of £100.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD seconded the Motion. He believed that the conclusion at which the Commission would arrive was already known, and he regarded the money spent upon the Commission as absolutely wasted, as far as the discovery of any new facts was concerned. The question resolved itself entirely into one of prices and over-taxation of the raw material. Until the Government could hold out some promise of relief, agricultural Members were justified in dividing against this fraud of a Commission. The intention of the Government was to put off the evil day of reckoning with the deluded persons who supported them at the last election.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HERBERT GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden) protested against the way in which the hon. and gallant Gentleman treated the Commission. When the Government appointed the Commission they said that they were not aware of any remedy for the agricultural depression, but that if the farmers wished to state their case and to suggest a remedy, the Government were willing to give them the opportunity. Hon. Gentlemen opposite had nothing to complain of as to their position on the Commission. They had two representatives in whom they had complete trust, and it was said by some that they were almost in the position of "predominant partners" there. Gentlemen on the Government side of the House were as anxious as anyone for the Commission to report. He hoped the Amendment would not be pressed to a Division.

*MR. J. ROUND (Essex, Harwich) said, that agriculturists had hoped for an interim Report at Christmas, and, disappointed in that, they had a right to know when the Commission was likely to report. A Royal Commission was appointed in 1878, and the House was aware that some of the recommendations of that Commission had not yet been carried out; he was one of those who thought the recommendation with regard to transferring the liability of the maintenance of the indoor poor might be carried out with advantage.

*MR. WALTER LONG (Liverpool, West Derby) hoped that his hon. Friends would not Divide. He could understand their impatience, or that of any agriculturist, and especially of the representatives of Essex, but a great deal of trouble had been devoted by the Commission to getting the best evidence, and in many cases it was impossible to anticipate what the witnesses would say before they were called. He could not admit the Minister for Agriculture was right in saying that the Opposition as such had a majority on the Commission. If the inquiry were to be brought to a successful conclusion, it could only be by a further expenditure of money. Success would be impossible if agricultural Members persisted in trying to decrease the Vote for the Commission.

MR. R. W. HANBURY said, that the Committee had now heard on the authority of a member of the Commission that it was intended to spend a great deal more money on the Commission. That was the worst argument which his hon. Friend could have used against a Division.

*MR. LONG said, that he was not entitled to declare, nor had he stated, that the Commission was going to spend a great deal more money. He said that it might be necessary, in order to complete the inquiry now proceeding, to ask for more money.

MR. HANBURY said, that he objected to these Commissions altogether, and especially to Agricultural Commissions. The recommendations of the Commission of 1878 were not carried out, and the same fate would befall the recommendations of this Commission. Commissions were suggested by Governments in a difficulty. They cost a great deal of money; and in this case it was known that very little result would ever be obtained. Why could not the Government, which had the great Departments of the State and their experienced officials at its hand, find out remedies for itself instead of referring to Royal Commissions? The cost of these Commissions was a great addition to the cost of our Civil establishments. He hoped his hon. Friend would Divide.

MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham) said, that he should support the Amendment as a protest against this Commission. It was appointed to find out what everyone knew. The cause of the present depression was our existing fiscal system, and a remedy was to be found in a change of that system. The recognition of that fact was spreading through the country, which, before long, would come to its senses.

*MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said, that of eight recommendations made by the Duke of Richmond's Commission, something like six had been carried out. There were Agricultural Commissions in 1821, 1833, 1836, and 1837; and any one who wished to trace the causes of the depressions which had visited this country would obtain much light from the study of the Reports of those Commissions. These inquiries made available to those who desired to understand the real causes of agricultural depression in the past a good deal of very useful information, and he hoped agricultural Members would not now do anything to discourage the laying bare everything which bore upon the present agricultural position.

MAJOR RASCH said, the feeling was so strong in agricultural districts, and especially in East Anglia, that he must, as a protest, take a Division against the Vote. He moved the reduction of the Vote by £100.

The Committee divided—Ayes, 26; Noes, 115.—(Division List, No. 31.)

MR. BARTLEY desired to refer to the item concerning the Secondary Education Commission. Although the Commission was appointed on March 6, 1894, and had now nearly finished its work, this was the first occasion on which the attention of hon. Members and of others could be drawn to it. The terms of reference threw a great deal of light upon the principle on which the Commission was formed. Those terms were—

> "Whereas we have deemed it expedient that a Commission should forthwith issue to consider what are the best methods of establishing a well-organised system of Secondary Education in England, taking into account existing deficiencies, and having regard to such local sources of revenue, such as endowment and otherwise, as are available, or may be available, for this purpose, and to make recommendations accordingly."

The object, therefore, of the Commission was clearly to take into account existing deficiencies. The whole working of the Commission, however, had been to ignore existing private schools. In many parts of the country private schools were very large, important, and excellent institutions; many of them rivalled some of the best educational institutions in the world. Roughly speaking, there were some 15,000 private schools in the United Kingdom, and in them were taught about 500,000 children of what was vulgarly called the lower middle and upper middle classes. It had been calculated that at least three-fourths of the boys and five-sixths of the girls who were receiving Secondary Education were taught in private

schools. Possibly the proprietors of private schools had an exaggerated idea of their own importance—he did not think they had—but, whether they had or not, when the formation of the Commission was suggested they were greatly alarmed lest their position might be endangered. They, of course, assumed that if a Commission were formed they would be properly and fairly represented on it, but, when it was formally announced who were to constitute the Commission, the alarm the private schools had previously felt was considerably increased. Not one single *bona fide* private teacher had been put upon the Commission. The Vice President of the Council had said, when his attention was previously drawn to that fact, that it was impossible to place representatives of all interests on the Commission. But it was a very remarkable thing that not one single member of a body which was deeply interested in the subject of the inquiry, and which had an undoubted right to representation on the Commission, were entirely ignored in the formation of the Commission. The private teachers strongly urged on the right hon. Gentlemen that their interest should be considered. They sent a deputation to the right hon. Gentleman, which the right hon. Gentleman received in no very friendly spirit.

MR. ACLAND: No, no!

MR. BARTLEY said, the view of the private teachers was, that the right hon. Gentleman did not receive them with that sympathy which they really had a right to expect. It was said by the right hon. Gentleman that the private teachers were represented on the Commission by Lady Frederick Cavendish. She was a lady whom everybody highly respected, but she did not in any way represent the private teachers; and, indeed, she had herself repudiated the idea that she represented any particular section or interest on the Commission. One of the principal points underlying the formation of the Commission was whether secondary education should in the main be left to private enterprise, as in the past, or whether it should be based on State aid or rate aid. He was not arguing which was the right or proper plan, but it would be agreed that it was on one or the other of those two lines that the question of secondary education was approached by all who were interested in the subject. The private teachers naturally regarded with apprehension any scheme by which State aid or rate aid would be given to secondary education, for they feared it would mean the ruin of private secondary schools, just as the great Act of 1870 had practically wiped private elementary schools out of existence. A general feeling prevailed that the Vice President of the Council was not friendly to Voluntary Schools. It was also thought that the right hon. Gentleman might not be friendly either to Voluntary or Secondary Schools, and it was a remarkable thing that, in the formation of the Commission, he thought it was not supposed to be a Party matter, and though there were many Conservative Members who had made their mark in the educational world, only one had been placed on the Commission, while five Liberal Members had been appointed.

MR. ACLAND: Including the hon. Member for Somersetshire.

MR. BARTLEY said, he would deal with the hon. Member for Somersetshire later on. And of the other sixteen Members of the Commission not one could be fairly said to represent the private teachers. He thought that in the formation of such a Commission opinion ought to be so fairly balanced that it would be regarded as an impartial body, but as things had happened he believed that the ideas which prevailed as to the constitution of the Commission would mar the result of its inquiries. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the hon. Member for Somersetshire. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to have forgotten that the names of the hon. Member for Somerset and two other Members of the Commission were on the back of a Bill, introduced in 1893, which proposed to give local authorities the power to raise rates in aid of secondary education, which showed that those hon. Gentlemen were biassed in the direction of State aided or rate aided secondary schools. Since that Bill was introduced, an agitation in opposition to it prevailed amongst the private teachers; and the College of Preceptors passed a series of resolutions showing that the principle of State aided or rate aided secondary schools should be carefully considered if the interests of private schools and of private teachers were not to be seriously injured. But those views had been entirely ignored in the formation of the Commission, and the Commission had shown by its actions, since it began its inquiries, that its members had read the instructions given them to mean that they might practically ignore the existing private schools. That being so, was it any wonder that the private teachers had a distrust of the Commission? No one would say that secondary education was not capable of great improvement. He by no means contended that secondary education was perfect, or that all private schools were good, but he thought the right action had not been taken in the appointment of the Commission to inquire into that very important question. He knew it was perfectly useless for him to move any reduction, but in the circumstances he had indicated, private teachers had a right to ask that their interests should be looked after by some Members of the House. They had done an immense deal for education in times past, and were prepared to do a deal more in the future. A wise policy would have been to have so framed the Commission that no one could have taken exception to its constitution and *personnel*, but would have been convinced that attention would be paid by it to those schools that were really efficient. The teachers thought that this Commission had been formed of Members the bulk of whom were in one frame of mind, that it was not, therefore, an impartial Commission, and that its Report would be of very little value.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) thought the point the hon. Member had raised was a perfectly legitimate one. Considering the enormous difficulty attending the formation of a Commission of this kind, he was glad to find the hon. Member had only criticised it with reference to one aspect. One of the great reasons why a body of this sort was required was because of the very large amount of money available—the beer money, as it was called—which many of them thought had not always been well used in some of the parishes. In order to deal with that, it was absolutely necessary that representatives of the County Councils, like his right hon. Friend, the Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert), who was Chairman of the Lancashire County Council, and the hon. Member for Somersetshire (Mr. H. Hobhouse), should find places on the Commission. It was also necessary that the School Boards should be represented. He only gave one representative to public schools and universities, and it was necessary that other bodies concerned should have some representation. With regard to the particular point raised by the hon. Member, he could assure him that, on this question of private schools, there was no Party view at all. It was not for him to speak of the work of the Commission, but he would like to make this remark: The hon. Member just now stated that, when the hon. Member for Somerset brought in a Bill dealing with secondary education, the private teachers passed some strong resolutions on that subject; and, pointing to the representations made by the College of Preceptors, he used these words:—"A very representative body of private teachers." It would be found that Dr. Wormell, the Vice President of the College of Preceptors, was on the Commission. It could not, therefore, be said that private teachers were absolutely unrepresented, for many of them looked upon Dr. Wormell as a man who would see that their case was fairly dealt with. It was difficult to find a largely organised body, like some others, who represented the private teachers, and he thought that, in selecting Dr. Wormell, he was doing one of the best things he could. Then, again, Mrs. Bryant was a member of the Commission, and it might safely be assumed that she would not suffer the interests of the private teachers to be neglected or unrepresented. Lady Frederick Cavendish was also on the Commission, and she represented a private commercial body—which would not be satisfied to be superseded by a pnblic representative body—a body which paid a regular commercial 5 per cent. She did not represent an interest which would be anxious to be swallowed up by a public corporation. Again, how could the hon. Member say that the representative of Cambridge University (Dr. Jebb) would be unmindful of the interests of private teachers? [Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY: "He is only one Member."] He must feel that the interests of private teachers were as safe in the hands of the Member for Cambridge University as of any member of the Commission. As to the composition of the Commission, although he admitted some of the criticisms of the hon. Member, he thought that on the whole the interests of the private teachers would not be unrepresented.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.), as Chairman of the Commission, would like to say a word or two in reply to the strictures of the hon. Member opposite, and he would venture respectfully to protest against the way in which the conduct of a Commission whose proceedings were confidential, had been canvassed by the hon. Member and assumptions made the basis of criticisms for which there was not the slightest foundation. The hon. Member had assumed that the Commission had read the reference in the particular sense he had put upon it. There was not the slightest foundation for that assumption. They had not read the reference in any such sense. It would not be proper for him to state what the Commission had done, but he might say there had not been any occasion, in his recollection, in which the interests of private schools had come into contact with other interests in the way in which the hon. Member seemed to suppose them to do. He did not remember any occasion on which any private schoolmaster could have wished to be present, or to have a representative present to champion the interests of private schools more than they were championed, and fully represented by several members of the Commission. There never had been an instance in which the question of private schools *versus* public schools had come before them in the kind of form in which the hon. Member assumed, and he could not imagine any body of men or women who could have given a more full consideration to everything that was to be said on behalf of private schools than that which had been given by this Commission. Several members of the Commission had an intimate acquaintance with the private schools, and were able to give the other members information as to the sentiments and wishes that actuated those schools. They had, further, the evidence of several leading private schoolmasters and mistresses; they had applied to various bodies to send representative witnesses before the

Commission, and those witnesses had been examined at great length. When hon. Members came to study the evidence on its publication, and when that evidence came to be submitted to the public, it would be seen that the Commission had taken every possible precaution to secure that the interests and the wishes of private schoolmasters and mistresses should be fully and fairly represented. He might fairly say that there had not been a single occasion during the meetings of the Commission when any Division was taken on anything approaching a political line. In fact, on not one single occasion had he heard anything in the nature of a political opinion expressed.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY: I did not say so.

MR. J. BRYCE: There were, in fact, several members of the Commission whose political opinions he did not at all know. He could not go further into details, but he might be allowed to say that the Commission fully and entirely realised the great value that private schools were in our educational system, and he believed that in the deliberations they were conducting the fullest possible attention would be given to the importance of maintaining them as an extremely useful adjunct to that system. He was convinced that when the final Report of the Commission appeared, and the conclusions at which they had arrived after their inquiries were published, it would be found that private schoolmasters had nothing to complain of.

*MR. R. L. EVERETT said, that schoolmasters of the highest respectability in his own constituency took the same view of the Commission as the hon. Member for Islington. They considered that those who were supposed to represent the interests of private schools on the Commission were not proper representatives of them, and they feared that the interests of private schools would be overlooked in favour of those of public schools. He was glad, however, to hear from the Government that the interests of private schools would be carefully guarded.

MR. R. W. HANBURY said, the President of the Board of Trade misunderstood the object of his hon. Friend the Member for Islington in introducing his Motion, and the *gravamen* of the charge made as to the constitution of the Commission. His hon. Friend did not for a moment charge the Commission with partiality or a desire to go beyond the terms of the reference, or twist them in consonance with their own particular ideas. His only complaint against it was that teachers were not properly represented on the Commission. The interests of teachers of private schools would no doubt be fairly considered, and though they might be represented, they were undoubtedly put at a distinct disadvantage by the fact that not a single one of the large body of private teachers sit on the Commission. With regard to secondary education, this country was far behind other countries, and we ought to do everything possible to facilitate the extension of secondary education on a sound basis. The object of secondary education should be to establish a kind of ladder by which every child should be able to mount from the primary schools to the Universities. It was in the interests of secondary education that his hon. Friend had raised this question. Undoubtedly the interests of secondary education would be largely prejudiced if the Commission ignored existing private schools and their teachers. An impression would be created that we were not going to utilise existing schools as far as it was possible to do so. Some of the schools might be defective, but many of them were doing good work which would hardly be surpassed by schools to be set up under a new system. Therefore, it would be a mistake if the Commission did not show a desire to utilise all the information it could get from competent private teachers. The ultimate difficulty that would have to be encountered would be the expense of setting up a new system; and that difficulty would be increased if the impression prevailed that the Commission did not duly consider what he would call in this relation Voluntary Schools, and if rate-aided or state-aided schools were set up without the manifestation of any desire to utilise efficient private schools. A further difficulty that would have to be encountered was that the bulk of the people were hardly awake to the necessity for the organisation of secondary education, just as in some counties they were indifferent to technical education. The object now aimed at was not in any way to thwart the advance of secondary education, but to take care that it should not be prejudiced by the exclusion of those who had practical experience in schools which cost nothing to the public purse, and many of which were in no way inferior to secondary schools on the Continent.

*MR. T. SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood) thought the last speaker could hardly have heard the greater part of the speech of the hon. Member for North Islington, who, if he simply wished to urge that private teachers would not be sufficiently represented on the Commission, had greatly disguised his intentions. He had rather imputed to the Commission political partisanship, incompetence, and unwillingness to look into the claims of private schools and private teachers. Undoubtedly these ought to be taken into account, because they were, as a rule, of a very different character from the dames' schools that were superseded by the Act of 1870. Many private schools were conducted by University Graduates, and achieved distinctive success; and, if he thought the Commission would not regard their interests, he would join in the criticism of the hon. Member for North Islington, who, however, instead of waiting for the Report, had prejudiced its possible scope and direction. Having been a witness before the Commission, he knew the thoroughness with which it conducted its inquiry, and that the claims of private teachers would not be overlooked. The defence the Vice President had offered of the composition of the Commission with reference to the representation of the teachers of private schools had been most conclusive, and it ought to be satisfactory to the hon. Member for Preston. It should be remembered that the Vice President was not at first favourable to a Commission, because he desired to see something done without prolonged delay. A conference was held at Oxford at which the Bishop of London advocated a Commission on the ground that investigation ought to precede legislation. The Vice President yielded to the wish of that Conference, and appointed a small Commission, in the hope that if it were not an unwieldy body it would report the sooner. Having regard to these facts, the right hon. Gentleman might be congratulated upon his success in making the Commission a fairly representative body. If any fault was to be found, it was that it did not contain any direct representation of the Technical Instruction Committees of the County Councils; but he made no complaint, because he knew the Commission would not overlook either the interests of private teachers or the work of the Technical Instruction Committees.

*MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, his hon. Friend the Member for Islington objected to the constitution of the Commission because one important section of the people who were doing most for secondary education at the present day were wholly unrepresented on the Commission. The Committee were aware that objection had been taken in various quarters to the composition of the Commission, and if any justification for that objection were needed it was to be found in the speech of the hon. Member for the Heywood Division of Manchester (Mr. Snape). The hon. Gentleman had told them that the Commission really originated at the Oxford Conference. In that Conference the teachers of private schools took a very large part. Commissions might be nominated in two ways. There were Commissions which were representative, and Commissions which were judicial. The latter Commissions were composed of a body of men selected not because they had experience of the subject to be dealt with, but because they occupied an impartial position. The hon. Member had truly said that it was intended to make this Commission representative, and if so it ought to have been fully representative, and to have had representatives of private schools amongst its members. It was admitted that the country owed a great deal to the private secondary schools. It seemed to him that if the Commission were to lay down lines which the improvement and development of secondary education should in future follow, it was of the utmost importance that the Commission should be as representative as possible.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, he took a great interest in secondary education, but he also took much interest in the Manning of

Ships Committee and its Report. The Committee was presided over by the hon. Member for Cardiff. They could not have a better chairman, or one more competent to analyse the subject and make a good report to the House. But he had heard—it might not be true—that there was hesitation on the part of one or more shipowners to give evidence before the Committee because of some element in the composition of the Committee. He wished to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he was aware of any unwillingness on the part of the shipowners to give evidence. If there be any substantial ground for the objection to the composition of the Commission he held that that ground should be at once removed. The Report of the Committee was of great importance from a national point of view. It was upon the Mercantile Marine that the Imperial Navy must lean in time of war for a supply of men. Therefore, anything which would improve the Mercantile Marine was of national importance. He noticed that £3,000 was set apart for the Committee. He did not know whether that was an additional sum or the total sum. [Sir J. T. HIBBERT: "That is all."] He supposed that partly accounted for the increased Estimate of £3,000. At all events, the Committee had been sitting long enough to be able to present a Report; and if they had not presented one he thought a little pressure in the shape of a friendly letter from the President of the Board of Trade might be put upon them. He confessed that the condition of the Mercantile Marine afforded a most melancholy spectacle of decay. Of the 80,000 men, 27,000 were foreigners, and of the 53,000 left, 25,000 were under five years' service. It was terrible that the mercantile marine should have fallen to such a low condition. If any step could be taken by the Committee or the Government to remedy this terrible state of things, a great benefit would be conferred on the country as well as upon the mercantile marine. Could the President of the Board of Trade tell them whether the Committee were likely to report on an early day, and if not, could he give any reason for the delay?

MR. J. BRYCE said, he had never heard of any unwillingness on the part of shipowners to give evidence before the Committee. The Committee had taken evidence at various seaports, and he hoped it was now approaching the termination of its labours. When exactly the Report would be presented he could not say.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES said, he was surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that he was unaware of objection being urged to the composition of this Committee, for he himself had understood that a well-known member of a Hull shipping firm had even written a letter expressing that objection. The first remark he had to make was an inquiry whether this was a Commission or a Committee, because he observed that while it was under the head of Commissions it was in a note described as a Committee. Was it a Departmental Committee of the Board of Trade, one of those such as there had been half-a-dozen of upon the Rules of the Road at Sea, each reviewing the work of its predecessor? Was it appointed by the Board of Trade, and why should it cost £3,000? Who got this monstrous sum of money? Here was a Department calling itself the Board of Trade, though, of course, it was well-known there was really no Board beyond the right hon. Gentleman opposite, so eminent as statesman and historian; and this Department had at command nautical advisers by the score, and a Marine Department. Whenever he asked the right hon. Member a question in reference to matters connected with the sea, he was always answered on the authority of the Marine Department, upon which, he was always told, could be found the most eminent sailors. Well, if the right hon. Gentleman had all this nautical knowledge, and navigating experience at hand, why did he not avail himself of it? Why did he come to the House for £3,000 for somebody else? The persons who were paid for this marine work should do it, and £3,000 additional should not be provided from the taxes to do work the right hon. Gentleman and his subordinates should do. They were well paid, too highly paid, he thought, and the Marine Department had done nothing but mischief to our merchant shipping since it was instituted, and this Committee or Commission was eminently calculated to do more mischief to our carrying trade, upon which the country depended for its prosperity. What was it trying to do? It was attempting to fix for each ship the number of men.

*THE CHAIRMAN (MR. J. W. LOWTHER): I think it is not competent for the hon. Gentleman to go into that matter upon this Vote.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES said, he was commenting upon this item of £3,000 for this Marine Committee in respect to the work it would do. But not to transgress the ruling, he would say generally that the Marine Department of the Board of Trade, ever since the Department raised its ambitious head, had endeavoured to strangle the carrying trade of the country; and this was a further attempt. It was endeavouring to impose new regulations as to our fellow-subjects, the Lascars, which would tend to prevent their employment. If that was to be the result, he would rather vote £3,000 not to have the Committee. Specifically he asked why, with all the strength of the Marine Department available, had the Committee been appointed, and why had it been packed?

MR. A. B. FORWOOD (Lancashire, S.W., Ormskirk) said, that, as he was a member of the Manning Committee, he might perhaps be allowed to give his hon. Friend the information for which he asked. He was rather disappointed that the President of the Board of Trade had not himself explained what was the genesis of this Committee. It was a departmental Committee appointed by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor in office, who invited several Members of Parliament to serve upon it. The reason for appointing the Committee was the statement made by an hon. Member of that House that it was the habit and custom of British shipowners to underman their ships. The question of the manning of the mercantile Navy and of the training of the men for that service was, he regretted to say, not included in the scope of inquiry, which was limited strictly to the question whether there was any truth in the charge that it was the habit of British shipowners to underman their ships.

ADMIRAL FIELD asked who the hon. Member was who made the charges? His name ought not to be kept secret.

MR. FORWOOD replied that it was the hon. Member for Middlesbrough. The Committee was appointed in April or May last year, and it had been in almost continuous session since. It had taken a vast amount of evidence, and he presumed that the expenditure to which attention had been drawn was for the payment of the expenses of the seamen and other witnesses who had been brought to London. He thought he might say that all the evidence had now been heard. A digest of that evidence was in course of preparation, and in about a month or six weeks it would be in a state of sufficient preparation to enable the Committee to reassemble to consider its Report. It had been asked whether it was true that a shipowner had refused to give evidence, and in reply he had to say that he believed one shipowner did decline to do so. There was, however, abundant evidence without his before the Committee. He thought that the results of the Inquiry would be satisfactory to those who believed that the British shipowner was still a man who took pride in his vessels and the crews that manned them.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT referred to the Opium Commission, which he said had had a very remarkable history. He supposed there was not a single Member who, during the past three or four years, had not been deluged with petitions, and letters, and protests with regard to the opium question. In the whole history of modern agitation it would be very difficult to find a more complete illustration of the waste and blundering of that unmitigated abominaion "the political crotcheteer" than was furnished by this Commission and the cost it had involved. He hoped the lesson would not be lost on hon. Gentlemen opposite, many of whom still favoured fads and crotchets and prejudices quite as absurd as those represented by the Anti-Opium Agitators. For a long time it was intended that India should bear half the cost of the Commission. He was very glad to know that that monstrous proposal had been abandoned, and that this country was to pay the whole charge. That meant that the taxpayers of this country had to find £16,900 to satisfy the prejudices of people who had engaged in one of the most groundless agitations ever started in this or any other country. Those who were responsible for imposing this Commission upon India and upon the taxpayers of this country were Gentlemen who sat on the opposite side of the House. They really ought to bear the cost of this Commission, instead of its being placed on the taxpayers. He hoped the results of this agitation would be borne in mind by them when other equally mischievous and even more injurious crotchets with regard to India were pressed forward for consideration.

Mr. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.) did not regret the appointment of this Opium Commission. It would, in his opinion, be a very cheap inquiry if it dispelled, as he believed it would, the delusions which existed in the memories of many earnest and sincere but misinformed persons on the subject of the use of opium. He was not sure that the outcry that had been raised against various Royal Commissions was quite reasonable. It was not a useless function that Commissions discharged if they dispelled delusions. They were at any rate useful instruments in the hands of Governments who wished to get rid of embarrassing questions. If the delusions of those who thought that they could get rid of agricultural depression by certain nostrums, or who thought that a uniform value could be given to silver by Bimetallism, or who held that the evils arising from the abuse of opium could be done away with altogether—if such delusions could be dispelled by Royal Commissions at a reasonable outlay, the money was well spent, and the Government was justified in having recourse to these methods of investigation.

Sir MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbrightshire) said, that the hon. Member for Sheffield had indulged in rather strong language against those who proposed needless commissions. But if the hon. Member would cast his mind back to former Sessions he would see that the Motion against the opium traffic had been an "annual" in the House of Commons. Of course there were two opinions upon this question, but a large number of people in the country felt convinced that we were doing a very great wrong to India by promoting the growth and sale of opium. There were Motions on the subject in 1877 and subsequent years down to the day of the appointment of this Commission, but no satisfactory settlement was arrived at. It was stated that the use of opium was not a good thing and did much harm. At the same time it was granted that sometimes in malarial districts opium was a protection against fever. There could be no doubt that many people thought over this question earnestly, and he was himself one of those who suggested the idea of a Commission, for he was of opinion that any delusions which were entertained on this subject ought to be investigated and dispelled. The question was—was this Committee worth having or not? He was satisfied the time spent upon it had not been misspent, and the evidence would not have been accumulated in vain.

Mr. BARTLEY reminded the Committee that on the 20th of August last he moved that the whole charge should be borne by this country, but he received the usual answer from the Chancellor of the Exchequer saying the Government could not think of it. It was satisfactory to think the Government had learnt wisdom in the Recess, and that the shabby trick of putting this paltry charge upon India had been abandoned. The information was wanted not by India but by England. If India had wanted an inquiry into the consumption of alcohol in this country, and proposed that this country should pay the half of it, he had no doubt this House would have laughed at the idea altogether. The cases were on all-fours. At the same time he thought the cost of the Commission rather heavy.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT said, the reference of the hon. Member to the discussion on the subject last year entitled him to take credit to himself in the matter. A large part of the expenditure had been obliged to be paid to Indian officials, and only between £6,000 and £7,000 had been paid in travelling and other allowances to the Commissioners. Whether the Commission had done good or harm, whether it was necessary or unnecessary, he thought all would agree that the thanks of the House were due to the Chairman and Members of the Commission for the way they had laboured since their appointment, and he wished to tender him their thanks for the manner in which they had devoted themselves to the service of their country.

Mr. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.) said, the opinion had been hazarded that this Commission was granted in order to meet the views of certain "faddists." He did not at all object to the expression, but as a matter of fact the group of Members referred to voted against the Motion. They did not wish for this Commission, and were not responsible for its appointment. Before the hon. Member got up again to make a furious attack on hon. Members he should satisfy himself as to what were the real facts. The newspapers in India were never tired of saying that he and his friends—his own name was freely mentioned—insisted on this Commission being appointed. So far from that, he spoke and voted against its appointment, and all those associated with him did exactly the same thing.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD asked when the Report of the Commission would be presented. The Commission, he understood, returned in June or July last year.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, it had been necessary to send the Report to India to be signed by some Native members of the Commission. As soon as it was returned from India it would be presented to Her Majesty the Queen and to Parliament.

*MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON said, he joined in congratulating the Government upon their tardy repentance, but that did not cure the mischief done originally by the proposal to throw half the cost of the Commission on India. One reason given for the course taken in reimposing the Indian Cotton Duties was that there was excitement and apprehension of disturbance in India arising from the belief that India was administered rather in the interests of this country than of India. One of the things that had especially contributed to foster that uncomfortable feeling was the fact that the Government intended in the first instance to place half the charge of the Opium Commission upon India.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said, he wished to correct the misapprehension of the hon. Member for Bradford who did not hear his remarks. The hon. Member seemed to think that he was attacking the Members of Parliament who took part in a certain Division. His description of a certain section in this country as faddists and crotcheteers applied to the anti-opium agitators in general. And among the anti-opium agitators he imagined that the Member for East Bradford held the position of Arch-priest.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE asked whether it was quite clear that the whole of the cost of the Opium Commission was to be borne by this country. The people of India felt that no inquiry was necessary—that the whole of the information was already at the disposal of the British Government. But Anglo-Indians looked forward to the Report with great interest, believing it would largely justify the existing system with regard to the opium revenue in India. He wished to refer to the Commission on Secondary Education, which had greatly exercised a very important part of the educational world. The Commission was very representative of an important class of opinion, but there was another class that was not represented at all. Secondary schools might be divided into two branches——

*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER): I must call the attention of the hon. Member to the fact that the composition of this Commission has already been the subject of discussion for some considerable time in this House. If he desires to discuss it he must confine himself strictly to the composition of the Commission, and must be careful not to deal with the general question of secondary education, which would be quite out of order on this Vote.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he quite understood the position. He wished to call attention to the fact that the private schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, that large interest in the educational world, which received no assistance, was not represented on the Commission. They had already given evidence before the Commission, but there were one or two points on which they felt the gravest dissatisfaction. One of the points on which they complained was that the Commission sent inquiries to the schools in the country; and that these inquiries were directed mainly, if not entirely, to schools that received assistance either from grants, or from endowments, or other sources. If that were true, then it showed that the inquiry had been conducted in a very imperfect manner. Then, again, suppose there were a deficiency of accommodation in a particular locality or in a certain district, the presumption was that such deficiency had been ascertained in secondary schools in that locality. Recommendations were made for supplying the deficiency. In calculating the allocation, it was amazing——

*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER): The hon. Member seems now to be discussing the question of secondary education generally. He cannot do that upon this Vote. He must confine his remarks to the composition of the Commission.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, that his complaint was that, in making the calculation, the places in private enterprise schools were not reckoned. He contended that a great injury was being done to private enterprise schools, and also to the ratepayers. The deficiencies would have to be supplied, and the Commission would recognise that they must be supplied by State-aided schools, and this would constitute a grievous burden on the ratepayers, and would inflict a grievous injury on that class of enterprise which was most meritorious. It would, moreover, throw a grievous burden on local taxation. His complaints were from the very beginning. He complained of the composition of the Commission; of the great injustice that was being done to the great interest of private enterprise schools, and of the imperfect manner in which the evidence had been taken. They visited private schools, but they did not trouble to visit the public schools. He begged to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Question put, that Item P. be reduced by £100.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) was proceeding to discuss the Opium Commission, when—

*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER) said that the hon. Member was out of order.

MR. R. W. HANBURY asked whether, as a reduction had been put on Subhead P., hon. Members must confine their remarks to that.

SIR R. TEMPLE pointed out that he moved the reduction to the Vote generally.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER contended that the questions regarding the Opium Commission had not been finally decided upon.

*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER): It is perfectly clear that when I have once put the question in regard to a particular subject, the discussion must be confined to that particular subject.

The Committee then divided:—Ayes, 43; Noes, 134.—(Division List No. 32.)

Vote agreed to.

On the Supplementary Vote of £8,500 for the Salaries and Expenses of the Inland Revenue Department,

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES called attention to the increase which had arisen under two heads—partly extra statistics and partly extra work. As to the statistics, he asked when they might really expect to have adequate statistics showing the working of the Finance Act. He must press for a promise of this information, or otherwise would have to move a reduction, which he did not wish to do. The information, in a most accessible form, was in possession of the Inland Revenue Authorities, and he desired, first of all, to have the amount of the principal value of the property charged with duty for each quarter, distinguishing separately, personalty, realty, settled and unsettled property, and also giving the amount of Estate Duty at each rate. He also wanted the amount of settlement estate, and the amount of the legacy and succession estate duty. With these statistics before them, they would be enabled to see how complete the success of the Finance Act had been. He doubted whether they would get value for their money, because he anticipated that this return would show the capital value returned for taxation to be diminishing. If it were diminishing, it was not of much consequence what rate of duty the Exchequer charged. This year had been an influenza year of an aggravated kind, and they might, therefore, expect it to yield as much capital value as 1891–2, another influenza year; in other words, they might expect £241,000,000 of total capital or principal value to be returned as chargeable with duty in order to justify any increase of the staff. He predicted, however, that the Exchequer would receive nothing like £241,000,000, and if it did not obtain this money, there was something seriously wrong with the Finance Act.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, he was desirous to give the hon. Member all the information desired, the more so that it would remove from his mind the painful impression which he appeared to entertain; and then, no doubt, Cassandra would be delighted to find her prophecies had not been fulfilled. The Annual Report had hitherto given full details of the character desired by the hon. Member under the old Act. The hon. Member had prophesied that each quarter would be less than the preceding quarter, but the fact was that each quarter had become better. It was satisfactory to find that this was so. He would be happy to supply the hon. Member with information which, he was sure, would gratify his patriotic soul.

Mr. BARTLEY drew attention to the sum of £2,000 extra which appeared in the Vote chiefly in connection with the evasion of the Dog Licence Duty, and asked for an explanation.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT said, the amount expended with reference to Dog Licences had been in consequence of the great evasion in payment of the tax in all parts of the country. This additional expenditure had enabled the Exchequer to secure 10,000 additional dog licences, or a sum of £3,750.

Mr. BARTLEY: Yes, but it has cost £3,500 to secure that amount.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: That may be so, but those licences will now be taken out from year to year. The extra provision was not, however, made solely in respect of Dog Licences.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES said, the methods of the Inland Revenue were very expensive. For instance, the authorities had written to him that, as he had two dog licences last year, they wished to know why he had only one dog licence this year, and what he had done with the other dog. As a matter of fact, the dog was lost. The Authorities also wrote saying that he had a carriage last year and asking where it was this year. All this cost money. The questions were silly, and really required no answer at all.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I receive these letters myself. If I have a dog, a carriage, or a horse less, the Authorities call my attention to the fact of the oversight, probably thinking I have forgotten it. They are only calling attention to the accuracy of the returns.

Vote agreed to.

Sir W. Harcourt.

On the Supplementary Vote of £90, the cost of the charges for portraits in the National Portrait Gallery,

Mr. GERALD LODER (Brighton) asked when they might expect to see the pictures removed from Bethnal Green? He had been told that they would be removed at the beginning of the month, but no steps had yet been taken in this direction. Many gentlemen interested in the National Portrait Gallery were extremely anxious that the services of Sir George Scharf should be secured.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT said, that the services of Sir G. Scharf had been secured for six months up to September next. There had been two causes of the delay in the transfer of the portraits from Bethnal Green. One was the unfortunate illness of Sir George Scharf, whose health was now, happily, improving, and the other was the death of the architect of the building. He hoped that the whole of the transfer would be completely carried out by June.

Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON said, that he believed the bulk of the Vote was for the purchase of the portrait of Carlyle. He thought there ought to be some restriction on the purchase of portraits of contemporary celebrities or of those only recently deceased. It was to be hoped that the friends and relations of distinguished men would make gifts of their portraits to the National Portrait Gallery; and these gifts would be discouraged if the habit of purchasing the portraits were acquired.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT said, that it was most desirable that such gifts as the hon. Member referred to should be encouraged. But there were cases where it was necessary to purchase the portraits.

Vote agreed to,

On the Vote of £49,519 9s. 2d. for the excess of Naval Expenditure beyond the ordinary Navy Grant for the year ended March 31st, 1894,

Mr. A. B. FORWOOD said, that he wished to call the attention of the Civil Lord to the cause of the Vote. It appeared from the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General that in March, before the close of the financial year 1893-94, the Admiralty made larger purchases of stores in the expectation of meeting the expenditure out of savings.

The request for the authority of that expenditure was only sent into the Treasury three or four days before the expiration of the financial year, and some days after the stores had been purchased. The present Financial Secretary of the Admiralty, when presiding over that Committee of which all the spending Departments stood in so much awe, was, more than any man, strenuous in condemnation of a Department making proposals for new expenditure at so late a date, and when that expenditure resulted in an excess. There were other items in this Vote on which the Treasury had animadverted. They thought that this expenditure might have been postponed to the next financial year. He was not questioning the propriety of the Vote, but if there were any value at all in the Comptroller and Auditor General's Department, which cost the country a fabulous sum of money, and if the Reports of the Department were not to be treated as so much waste paper when presented to the House, these questions of excess ought to be brought up with the circumstances to which the Comptroller and Auditor General had drawn attention. On this Vote, as on previous occasions, the Committee was confronted with the shortcomings on the provision for ships in Indian waters. It was a way of making the Estimates pleasant at the beginning of the year to anticipate and to take credit for that which there was little prospect of receiving. There was another point to which he wished to direct the attention of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. By the sinking of *The Victoria* we lost £12,490 in cash. We were pursuing, in reference to the ships of Her Majesty's Navy, a custom that might be all very well a century ago, but which was altogether unnecessary now. Under the present system a large amount in cash was carried by each one of our ships, with the result that if a vessel went to the bottom the money was lost. He suggested that a comparatively small amount in cash should be carried on board ships, and that the Treasury or the Admiralty should make a bank arrangement at the different ports at which vessels touched, by which Treasury Bills should be sold, and money sufficient for the payment of the crew obtained.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said, the right hon. Gentleman had alluded to an old controversy between himself and his successor in Office, the Financial Secretary, to whom his observations should be communicated. He, the learned Gentleman, said that too large credit had been taken for the Indian contribution. He had never been a Member of the Public Accounts Committee; but his impression was, that that Committee had sanctioned the course adopted by the Admiralty. He believed that that would turn out to be the fact when the award was published.

MR. FORWOOD: Will the award have retrospective action?

MR. ROBERTSON imagined so. He understood that what had been referred to Lord Rosebery for settlement was the meaning of certain words in an old convention. As to the money carried on board ship, the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman was worthy of, and should receive, consideration.

MR. HANBURY said, he had understood hitherto that what was referred to Lord Rosebery was the settlement of the equitable claims between India and England. He now understood the arbitration was of a very much more limited scope, and would go no distance whatever towards settling what was the real question, and that was—What was a fair demand India ought to make for certain vessels in Indian waters?

MR. ROBERTSON said, the contention of the Indian Government was, that certain small vessels—viz., such vessels as were necessary for the performance of police duties—should be paid for by India. The contention of the Admiralty was, that India should pay for the vessels necessary for the protection of Indian trade. The Prime Minister had placed a certain interpretation upon the words of the Convention, and his interpretation was now the subject of correspondence between the two Governments.

Vote agreed to.

On the Vote of £100 for the Ordnance Factories (the cost of the productions of which will be charged to the Army, Navy, and Indian and Colonial Governments),

COLONEL LOCKWOOD believed that, if he were to do his duty towards the Ordnance system generally, he would attempt to argue the whole case of the best smokeless powder that existed, and whether we were in possession of it, and whether the present cordite powder issued was the best powder. He would even go so far as the question of high explosives in shells. At that time of night, however, he would confine his remarks to the question of the last report on the recent explosion of nitro-glycerine at Waltham Abbey; to the deductions drawn by the Committee; to the question of the safety of the buildings there in the future; and to the composition of the Committee appointed to inquire into the cause of the explosion. That was the first opportunity they had had of discussing the most serious explosion of nitro-glycerine, as regards quantity, that had occurred, not only in England, but in any other country in the world. In the first place, he had to say he regretted the great delay which had taken place in the publication of the report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the explosion. The explosion took place on the 7th May of last year. The Committeee which had been appointed to inquire into a previous explosion at Waltham Abbey had just finished their labours in regard to that explosion, and was reappointed with commendable promptitude, by the Secretary of State for War, to investigate the causes of the fresh explosion. The Committee was reappointed on the 9th of May of last year, but its report was not circulated till September. That, considering the small amount of evidence taken, was a very great delay, and one of its results was that he was precluded from calling the attention of the House to the explosion last Session, while it was fresh in the public mind, instead of being, as now, only a memory of the past. On the appointment of the Committee, he had been rebuked for objecting to Lord Sandhurst as the Chairman of the Committee. He had objected to Lord Sandhurst, not because he had the smallest reason to doubt the capacity or the impartiality of the noble Lord, but because he thought the noble Lord, as the Under Secretary of State for War, was not the proper man to preside over an inquiry into the conduct of the very department with which he was officially connected, with regard to a matter affecting the lives not only of the men employed in the factory, but of the inhabitants of the town of Waltham Abbey. However, the Committee under Lord Sandhurst, in their report on the first explosion which occurred at Cam House, Waltham Abbey, on the 13th December, 1893, made some very strong comments on the state of things they found existing at Waltham Abbey. He said—

> "The Committee can have no hesitation in stating that the result of the inquiry, though it has not enabled them to place their finger confidently on the actual cause of the accident on the 13th December, has served the useful purpose of bringing to light very grave defects in the system of discipline and precautions prevailing at Waltham Abbey, and the urgent necessity for a comprehensive revision of the regulations, and for the adoption of disciplinary measures for their more rigorous enforcement."

The Committee also stated—

> "When the Explosives Act, 1875, was passed, Section 97, which exempts Government factories from its operation, was, it is understood, adopted in a very large degree, because it was considered that the Government department principally concerned—namely, the War Office—could be depended on to secure throughout its factories, without having recourse to the machinery provided for private factories, the same beneficial results which the application of the Act, and the introduction of an independent system of inspection, were designed to effect in the civil establishments. With this view the Committee are disposed to concur. But, if it should be found impracticable to secure, through the independent action of the War Department, results corresponding to those which Her Majesty's Inspectors of Explosives has accomplished in the private factories, then, in the judgment of the Committee, it would certainly be in the highest degree expedient that the question of subjecting the Government establishments, where explosives are manufactured, manipulated, or stored, to the inspection of Her Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, should be taken into serious consideration."

The report of the Committee on the nitro-glycerine explosion was not so strong; but at the same time it was sufficiently strong to cause misgivings as to the safety of their lives amongst those employed in the manufacture of the explosives. The Committee stated—

> "Many of those risks which the Committee signalised in their Report of the 25th of April 1894, on the accident of the 13th December 1893, in the Cam House at the Royal Gunpowder Factory, undoubtedly existed in the present instance, and some even in an aggravated form, with such further source of risk as would be liable to result from the public right of way before referred to, and to the extremely insufficient protection against the presence in the factory of unauthorised persons."

The Report proceeded to deal with risks, and among other things pointed out that the explosion might have been caused by foul play, by the wilful insertion, for instance, of a match-head by an unauthorised person into the factory. He ventured to think that such a Report of a Committee on the second explosion after they had reported on the carelessness and want of discipline in regard to the first explosion, showed that something was certainly wrong. The Report went on—

> "The Committee do not think it necessary to recapitulate the risks which they specified in their Report of 25th April, 1894, on the accident of the 13th December, 1893, in the Gunpowder Factory, but it is proper to remark that, of these, several existed, some even in an aggravated form, on the occasion of the present accident. Thus, although, according to the superintendent, the system of searching has been greatly improved since the accident of the 13th December, it is certain that full effect had not yet been given to the recommendations of the Committee on this head. The Committee's Report had not up to that time got into the hands of the factory staff, and thus the possibility of the existence of matches or other dangerous articles within the nitro-glycerine factory cannot be confidently disregarded."

* * *

> "It is also in the judgment of the Committee not desirable that a practice which is prohibited by the Explosives Act, 1875"—(as to the wearing of boots)—"and which is therefore not allowed in private factories, should be permitted in one of the Government factories."

Why had not full effect been given to the recommendations which had been made by the Committee consequent upon the inquiry into the first explosion? The Report proceeded—

> "Without, however, going through the various points in detail, the Committee desire to express their opinion that the whole of the regulations affecting the Cordite Factory should be revised in the directions indicated for the Gunpowder Factory Regulations in the former Report of the Committee."

The quantity of nitro-glycerine that exploded was nearly two tons, and he contended that an explosion of this extent should have been subjected to a very long and serious investigation. It should not merely have occupied the attention of what was practically a Departmental Committee for some days, with the examination of 23 witnesses, only 12 of whom had any pretensions to any skill at all, and all of whom, excepting two, were connected, more or less, with the former administration of this factory. He presumed that the terms of reference to the Nitro-glycerine Explosion Committee were exactly the same as those of Cam House Explosion Committee. As far as he had been able to make out, only two independent witnesses were called, and he complained that the question of the construction of danger buildings was not sufficiently considered. By the courtesy of the Financial Secretary he was enabled to go to Waltham Abbey and see the new precautions taken, and the buildings that had been recently erected in place of those that had been blown down, and he was bound to say that he was pleased with many things he saw. He regretted, however, that the old ground had been so much occupied, and that more space had not been allowed for the building. He complained also that more witnesses were not examined on the question of the future safety of the building, for after an explosion of such magnitude, he thought more evidence of a perfectly independent kind ought to have been heard. Then as to the question of the construction of danger buildings, that point was left entirely to the men who had built them, in face of the evidence of Colonel McClinlock on the subject. He did not intend to make any reference to the case of Colonel McClintock, for it had been brought before the House by the hon. Member for Preston; and the Secretary for War stated that he had acted as he had done in the matter for reasons connected with the Service. That, of course, he was obliged to regard as a sufficient answer beyond which he could not go; but he did complain that the evidence of Colonel McClintock did not receive the attention from the Committee that it ought to have received. He thought, moreover, that it was a great pity that the witnesses examined before the Committee were not allowed to hear the evidence of those who followed them, because their presences when other witnesses were being examined might have been useful. Then as to the cause of the accident—he believed himself that the washing house exploded first, and that it then extended to what was called the storehouse. Four suggestions were made as to the cause of the accident—through the "skimmers" (which were used at Ardeer), the probable fagging of an earthenware cock; the fall of some article used in one of the washing houses, and foul play. Into the suggestion of foul play, however, the Committee declined to enter. The principal person who suggested foul play was Colonel

McClintock, and his evidence on this head was hardly regarded by the Committee at all. The whole thing seemed to centre in the experience and practice at Nobel's factory at Ardeer, and nobody seemed to receive proper recognition from the Committee, except those connected with the factory. He might be told that there had been scarcely any accidents at Ardeer, but in an important investigation like this, further evidence ought to have been brought forward. The only witness outside was Mr. Guttman, and his evidence was extremely strong, and he was the only witness who suggested any theory as to the cause of the accident. Though the Committee in their report said they did not accept his idea of the hot soda-washing making the nitro-glycerine more sensitive, yet in a subsequent paragraph they seemed to modify that opinion very much. He should like to call attention to Mr. Guttman's evidence. He gave some very startling facts, especially as regarded the chemistry department. He was asked first of all whether there were any points in connection with the arrangements at the factory which struck him as being exceptional as compared with those in other factories. He replied, that there were no doubt many points. There was, for instance, the too close proximity of the washing house to the nitrating house. He said—

> "I see no reason why they should not be altered, there is room. I was asked by the Superintendent of the Royal Gunpowder Factory to look into the question of the last explosion of the powder, and on the 19th of April I sent him a communication in which I dwelt upon the unsuitability of the present system of washing."

He further objected to their washing nitro-glycerine at a temperature of 50° Centigrade. He stated that when he went into the washing house at Waltham Abbey he noticed it was full of nitro-glycerine vapours. Then he told a most extraordinary story. He said he asked the chemist in charge at what temperature he was working, and the man replied, "About 30° Centigrade." He then dipped his hand into the tank and said, "This is at least 50° Centigrade," and it was. He thought a chemist in charge of such a high explosive, who made a mistake by 20° Centigrade in its manufacture was not a fit man to be in charge. This witness also pointed out that the vapourised nitro-glycerine most probably would condense on the windows or skylights, and so constituted a danger, and suggested that the explosion happened through the skimmer slipping out of the man's hands after he had skimmed the stuff, and that the explosion was communicated to the storehouse. That skimmer weighed 36lbs. complete, and the height at which it fell would be about three feet. He thought this was, at all events, a plausible suggestion and the Committee did not seem to take any notice of this evidence in the Report. Since then at Ardeer they had reduced the heat used in the washing. The fact was, these hot washes were used because they were working under pressure, and the hotter the temperature the greater was the output. He hoped they would hear what measures had been taken to remedy the defects he had spoken of, and prevent any further catastrophe. Men turning nitro-glycerine into cordite were exposed to great danger, and worked with their lives in their hands. But they asked the Government to insist that the work should be carried on at a minimum of danger and a maximum of safety. His training as a soldier did not lead him to view with much favour the idea of placing the factory under the Home Office. Yet he was not sure that it was not the only way to insure absolute safety to the workmen. Then, seeing that the men employed in the danger houses, through no fault of their own, but through some chemical or mechanical action, might be blow to pieces at any time, he thought they should have a pension, and were entitled to more consideration at the hands of the Government than they had hitherto received. So far as the Secretary for War and the Financial Secretary had been able they had met the claims that had been legally made. But he appealed to them as to whether a special class could not be catered for men employed in these dangerous factories.

Mr. HANBURY said, this was the second occasion within a few months on which the case of Waltham Abbey had had to be brought before the House, and the second occasion on which they had had to comment on the report condemning, root and branch, the whole system upon which the factory was worked. In view of the series of explosions that had occurred, and the gross maladministration of the factory, he asked whether it was not high time such factories were put under the same inspection as other factories throughout the country. The Report they had received was not that of an independent Committee, but it was that of a Committee on which the War Office was largely represented; and the witnesses were men engaged at the factories. This was not a class of evidence from which, as a rule, you would be able to come to a satisfactory conclusion. The House would have had more reason to be grateful to the War Office if, instead of appointing a Committee of this kind, it had done what would have been done in the case of any other factory—appointed an independent Committee so that it might have made an independent inquiry. He wanted especially to direct the attention of the War Office to what, after all, was the centre and kernel of the whole question, and that was that the Government factories ought to be put, as other factories were, under Home Office inspection. The first Committee which sat distinctly said that, in their opinion, it was to be regretted that these factories were specially exempted from Home inspection, and they said distinctly that, if great alteration did not take place, if the administration of the factory was not greatly improved, in their opinion the Act applying to private factories ought to be made to apply to Government factories also. Within a few days there came the second explosion, and, as to this, they were told that certain explosives ought to have been absorbed in other materials, in which condition they would have been far less dangerous than in their liquid form. This, in fact was what would have been done under the terms of the licence to any private factory; and there could be no reasonable doubt that if it had been done at Waltham the explosion would have been avoided. So that here were two successive reports, the first stating that this factory ought already to have been under Home Office inspection; and the second, that an explosion would have been averted if the ordinary requirements in a private factory had been carried out. Surely the time had come for setting aside all questions of etiquette, or whatever else it might be that tied the hands of the War Office in this matter. The men working in Government factories had as much right to have their lives protected as the men working in private factories. War Office inspection had been tried and found wanting. A further reason why ordinary precautions ought to be taken in Government factories was that the town of Waltham itself was exposed to risk, and the Government did not pay compensation on the same scale as private firms did. The town of Waltham might be blown to pieces. It was only by mere accident that one explosion was restricted to 1,500lbs. of nitro-glycerine, seeing that a few days before there had been in store no less than eight tons—a quantity which would not be allowed anywhere else. If the whole eight tons had exploded the loss of life would have been much greater, and the town would have suffered great damage. These Government factories, which ought to set a good example to private employers, paid miserably inadequate compensation to sufferers. Mrs. Suckling, whose husband had been employed at the factory for 15 years, was granted a pension of £14 7s. 2d. only until her possible re-marriage, and a gratuity of £10 for each of her three children. Mrs. Frost, whose husband had been engaged for nine years, was awarded a pension of £10 6s., and a gratuity of £17 for her two children. These cases compared badly with the compensation awarded to a widow whose husband was killed at an adjoining private factory—he thought it was Mr. Joyce's. The widow was to receive 15s. a week for two years, 10s. a week for the rest of her life, and 5s. a week for each child up to a given age. Surely if a private factory could pension its servant's widow on this scale the Government ought to set a better example than it did. The Government ought to manage this factory in the business-like way in which private factories were conducted. The Superintendent was appointed for five years, and entering upon his appointment with little knowledge or experience, he at the end of that term was withdrawn. There was an intention, he knew, to modify that system, and at the end of five years the Superintendent would not necessarily go, the War Office retaining the right to renew the appointment for another five years; but, surely, this was an inadequate way of dealing with such an appointment. Why not adopt the practice a private firm would follow, and having secured a good man for the post retain him as permanent Superintendent? He would be glad to have some information as to the hours of labour in these factories, which seemed to vary in each department to an extraordinary degree. The Committee which sat first recommended that in the black gunpowder factory the hours of labour should be reduced from 12 to 8, because they said 12 hours was too long a day for men in this dangerous employment, and a very proper recommendation. As a result the hours were reduced, but the pay of the men was cut down in proportion—a heavy loss to the men; and, in consequence of the complaints, he was informed a return had been made to the 12-hours system. So, illustrating the difference of hours in the several departments, he mentioned that the men in the gunpowder department on day-work worked 67 hours per week only, night-work 60 hours; but the machine department—the fitters—worked 54 hours; the engine men and stokers, 63½ hours; in the cordite works, 49 hours; in the stores, 54 hours; and in the nitro-glycerine works, 49 hours. This must lead to considerable confusion, and it would be much better and simpler for work to go on by a definite system of so many hours daily. How far had the recommendations of the first Committee been carried out? There was evidence given before the Committee that time after time more hydrants had been pressed for, and though this was essential for the safety of the factory, and the cost would be small, the request had again and again been refused. Had precautions against the extension of fire in the factory been properly carried out? In all private factories the number of persons allowed in the houses at one time was strictly limited, but in this Government Department there was no such restriction, and almost any number might go in. A great deal had been said about the visits of inspectors to dangerous buildings, but such visits were only made in the daytime, while it was at night that there was the greatest risk of explosion. It was shown in the evidence that a surprise visit was not often made, inspectors did not go at unusual times, and night after night passed without a visit. What guarantee was there that the system of inspection would be put and kept on a sound footing? It was shown in the evidence, too, that though rules and regulations were drafted for the conduct of the men, and the precautions to be adopted, these rules were never practically brought before the men, and many of them did not even know of the regulations. In their special recommendations the last Committee stated that actually one of the precautions upon which the War Office prided itself for preventing the spread of explosions really increased the danger, and they denounced the system root and branch.

MR. WOODALL asked if the hon. Member was referring to the last Committee.

MR. HANBURY said, he meant the last one on the nitro-glycerine explosion. The Committee said that the system of manufacture and supervision, the distribution and, to some extent, the protection of the buildings, called for modification and improvement. Considering that this was a War Office Committee, he thought that this statement insinuated a great deal more than was said. The gist of the Report was contained in the following recommendation:—

> "The Committee intimate their decided conviction that the position, or perhaps more strictly, the distribution, of the buildings composing the Quinton Hill factory, and more especially that part of it which concerns the manufacture of nitro-glycerine, is eminently unsatisfactory."

Yet these buildings were, he believed, being re-erected on exactly the same site in spite of this recommendation. If that was really being done, the conduct of the War Office could hardly be condemned too strongly. It was because Colonel McClintock fought against the re-erection of these buildings on the same site that he had been made to resign. There was a further recommendation by the Committee with regard to the manufacture of cordite. If, as the Committee understand, the exigencies of the service demand the temporary use of the factory, as at present arranged, when the damaged buildings and works have been re-erected, then the output should be reduced to what may for the time be absolutely necessary, and any accumulation of explosives in a dangerous form should be avoided as far as possible. That that recommendation should be necessary was very unsatisfactory. This was practically the only factory in which we manufactured cordite. It could not be manufactured in India, where the attempt to manufacture it had failed. So, in the case of the only factory available, the Committee thought it their duty to warn the authorities that cordite ought only to be manufactured on a very small scale. Our store of cordite was very limited in comparison with the amount of smokeless powder manufactured and stored by foreign Governments. He begged to ask the Government what they proposed to do under the circumstances. Whatever might be the merits of this powder, the House had a right to demand, in the first place, that the lives of the workers should be properly protected; and, in the next place, that the factory should be carried on in such a way that we should be able to get an explosive in quantities sufficient for the country's needs.

Mr. WOODALL said, every experience the War Office had had of the new explosive only confirmed their judgment with respect to the wisdom of its adoption. He ventured to think it was hardly fair of his hon. Friends opposite to have arraigned, as they had done, the conduct of his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, in appointing the Departmental Committee, and especially the strictures passed upon the conduct of Lord Sandhurst, who had presided over it—[An hon. Member: "Not the conduct"]—or as to its independence. In the first place, the Committee never professed to be anything but a Departmental Committee. In the next place, the best answer to the allegation of want of independence was to point out that the Committee condemned the processes fearlessly, root and branch. With regard to the explosion, he reminded his hon. and gallant Friend that it occurred on May 7. The Committee appointed to make special inquiry into the circumstances of the explosion began their work almost instantly, and on July 12 they signed the Report which was presented to the House. Something had been said with regard to the witnesses called before the Committee; but it had not been suggested that any one person having any claim of technical or practical knowledge on the subject was not called who might have been. As was perfectly well known, the whole processes involved in the manufacture were recent in their discovery, and the number of experts on the subject was extremely limited. He thought, however, they might more profitably employ themselves in considering what had been the general outcome of the inquiry and what had been done by the Department to prevent the recurrence of such an accident. Cordite, as hon. Gentlemen were aware, had for its dangerous components nitro-glycerine and gun-cotton. In their natural condition both were extremely dangerous, but when brought into combination they were practically safe. The accident in question occurred in the processes connected with the production of nitro-clycerine, and although the Committee exhausted every possible opportunity of discovering the cause of the explosion, the cause remained a mere matter of conjecture. That the explosion occurred in the washing-house in the first instance, and that the concussion caused an explosion in the storehouse, seemed to have been the view generally accepted by the Committee. What did the Committee recommend? Perhaps its most important recommendation was that the output should be reduced and that no accumulation of explosives in a dangerous form should be allowed. The Department had resolved that no nitro-glycerine should be kept in store, but that nitro-glycerine as it was produced should be blended with gun-cotton, and so brought into a condition which was free from danger. Then the Committee called attention to the fact that, in highly-technical processes involving necessarily subjects that might naturally occupy the attention and the mind of a highly-skilled chemist, the men engaged, however competent they were, had not that reputation which would command the confidence that the public might naturally expect from a Government Department. The War Office had been able to satisfy that view by appointing a highly-skilled chemist—Dr. Kelvin. He was charged with constant supervision of all processes and the control of all subordinate chemists, and it was his business to keep himself in constant communication with the factory and to make himself familiar with every process. Without his authority no departure was permissible.

Colonel LOCKWOOD inquired whether the degrees of temperature in washing would be allowed to be altered without his consent.

Mr. WOODALL would say certainly not. The temperature was watched as sedulously as any matter of detail in the process of manufacture. The position of superintendent differed from the actual chemist. Colonel McClintock's position did not involve any responsibility for the technical process of manufacture, but the Government had continued the method of appointing a military man, highly trained in the science of his profession, and capable of maintaining with strictness and constant severity the discipline of the establishment. He was delighted to have the opportunity of testifying to the efficiency of Colonel Ormsby, who had been appointed by the Secretary of State. His hon. Friend had alluded to the five years' system. He remembered that Lord Morley's Committee gave a great deal of attention to the system of five years' appointments, and he also remembered that a competent witness said that that system was a good one provided that a man of average ability might have his engagement terminated before the expiration of five years without any reflection being cast upon him. If he was found to be a man of exceptional value his appointment would be continued from time to time, and that would, no doubt, be the course always followed. His hon. and gallant Friend opposite had asked for a guarantee that in the arrangements the Government had made they had endeavoured to keep before them the ensuring of a minimum of danger to the men employed. He could honestly say that this had been done. It had also been urged that the Government ought to have put themselves in the position of private manufacturers, and ought to have accepted the constant control of the Home Office. One of the most valued members of Lord Sandhurst's Committee held that these regulations, from the experience derived, were sufficient. He would go further, and say that, if there were any regulations that the Home Office was pleased to provide, the Department had not the smallest objection. A great many irregularities were found, but the Committee would hardly expect him to refer to them in detail. His right hon. Friend had required that every one of these strictures should be taken to heart, and that every regulation for greater security should be followed, and he could without hesitation assure the Committee that these regulations had been very thoroughly and very stringently adopted. Reference had been made, and made very properly, as to the awards to families of those who had lost their lives in the explosions. Those awards were made under the Act under the interpretation of the Treasury, and the War Office was left with very little discretion. His right hon. Friend had expressed an opinion as to the making of a communication to the Treasury and a further application. Although the Treasury had not acceded to the appeal made to it, it had undertaken that in any case that might be submitted to it the case would be looked into. With regard especially to a young man of great promise as to whom on strict examination it was held that his relatives were not entitled to have anything awarded to them, an allowance had been made to his mother, although she was not entirely dependent upon him. The buildings were constructed, as they believed, with such modifications as would secure far greater safety and minimise danger. The main point with reference to which he desired to give an assurance to the Committee was that they did not contemplate that it would be safe to carry out the manufacture of cordite on the site now occupied. Whether they would require further land in the immediate neighbourhood, whether they would utilise the lands which belonged to the estate now in occupation of the Government, or whether they would erect laboratories in some place more remote from Waltham—were qestions which remained yet to be decided. They would have, however, a duplicate factory, and an endeavour would be made to build it somewhat beyond the range of danger of explosion. The authorities were also very happy to know that they could rely on the trade for the production of cordite according to Government specifications, and they had received very valuable assistance from the different manufacturers of the country in saturating the Government gun-cotton, by which means the element of danger largely disappeared.

*Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) thought that the Government would see the great difficulty of introducing a Vote of this magnitude at such a late hour. There were many other questions remaining to be discussed, but, inasmuch as a pledge had been given of a day for general discussion, all he would ask now was with regard to the supply of cordite, and what was the position as to the supply of small-arm ammunition. This question of ammunition was very serious. Last year the right hon. Gentleman told the House that he was not satisfied with the supply of small-arm ammunition. He knew that the late Government were extremely anxious about the supply, and it was well known to the House what additions could have been made to the reserve since the late Government went out of Office. But the other night the Secretary for War told the House that—

> "there had been developed in the country a wonderful facility for supplying small-arm ammunition, and it was unnecessary to keep any exaggerated reserve, as the War Office was advised that it had sufficient for its purposes now."

That was a very strong expression to use, and it was, he submitted, going further than the right hon. Gentleman was entitled to go. The reserve was not only not exaggerated, but, unless the conditions had changed very much, it could not be called a reserve at all. The Japanese army was stated to have a reserve of 720,000,000 rounds of this ammunition. Cordite had for the last year or two only been produced in sufficient quantities to supply the current demand, and it was public knowledge that there could not be an adequate reserve of the ammunition depending entirely on cordite. The subject was so grave that he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would, before these Estimates were discussed again, take these matters into his personal consideration, and reconsider his extraordinary statement that—

> "the War Office, according to their competent advisers, stood very well in this respect."

He could not understand such a statement, which was at variance with all the advice received by the late Government.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, he quite recognised the intention of the hon. Member, and knew from what he had said on this and previous occasions how well he was informed upon this subject, in which he took great interest. It was rather a question to raise on the Estimates at large or the Vote for Ordnance. It did not arise on this Vote so much as on that for warlike stores. But he would look into the matter. He was not now prepared with figures, and would endeavour to satisfy the hon. Gentleman on the next occasion.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcester, E.) said, it would be recollected that earlier in the discussion his right hon. Relative put a question in reference to the Corps of Armourers at the Small Arms Factory at Birmingham, and received an answer that no change was contemplated there. But he understood that afterwards some doubt arose as to whether the question had been understood, and if the answer represented the facts perhaps the Financial Secretary would make his explanation clear.

MR. WOODALL said, he was indebted to the hon. Member for the opportunity of saying that he did not quite clearly comprehend the question put to him by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. He understood him to ask whether the plant which had been put into disuse at Bagot Street had been transferred to Woolwich. He found that the question really referred to the Corps of Armourers, and he had to explain that some important changes had been made in their organisation. Hitherto the men as required had been chosen from the ordinary ranks of civil life, and brought to Bagot Street to be instructed in the technique of small arms. It had now been determined, on the recommendation of a Committee and the approval of his right hon. Friend, that instead of armourers being selected from different regiments, they should be chosen from trained experienced workmen in Government factories recommended by the Director General of the Ordnance Factory, and, instead of being under the necessity of learning the practical art of dealing with small arms at Bagot Street they would be sent to Aldershot, there to be perfected in military training until they were certified as having practical acquaintance in small arms. The right hon. Gentleman was wrong in supposing that there was a transfer from Bagot Street to Woolwich. As a matter of fact, those men sent to Woolwich and Bagot Street would be sent to Aldershot, there to go through military training, instead of going through training as artificers.

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions reported to the House.

WAYS AND MEANS.

The House went into Committee.

(In the Committee.)

1. Resolved,—That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the years ending on the 31st day of March 1894 and 1895, the sum of £551,909 9s. 2d. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. Resolved,—That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1896, the sum of £10,136,600 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Resolutions to be reported this day; Committee to sit again this day.

REPORT OF SUPPLY.

The Report of Supply (March 18) brought up and agreed to.

ARMY ANNUAL BILL.

On the Motion for the Second Reading of this Bill,

MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON said, the Bill was not yet printed, and until it was printed the Government could hardly ask for its Second Reading.

MR. WOODALL assured the hon. Member that no changes had been made in the Bill.

Second Reading postponed till Monday next.

NAVAL WORKS (CONSOLIDATED FUND.)

Resolutions reported.

"That it is expedient to make provision for the construction of works and acquisition of land in the United Kingdom, and in certain Colonies, for the purposes of the Royal Navy, and to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums not exceeding in the whole £1,000,000 for such purposes."

"That it is expedient to authorise the Treasury to borrow, for the purpose of providing money for sums to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund, or for the repayment of sums so issued, by means of terminable annuities, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for Naval Services; and if those moneys are insufficient, out of the Consolidated Fund."

Resolutions agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mellor, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, and Mr. Robertson.

"Bill to make provision for the Construction of Works in the United Kingdom and elsewhere for the purpose of the Royal Navy, and to amend the law relating to the acquisition of land for Naval purposes." Presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed.—[Bill 173.]

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (LANCASHIRE SITTINGS) BILL.

MR. W. H. HOLLAND (Salford, N.) moved that this Bill be read a second time.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) desired to know from the Attorney General whether the Government took upon themselves responsibility for the judicial changes which it was proposed to make by this Bill? If not, then he said that the change contemplated was far too great to be effected by the Bill of a private Member.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. T. REID, Dumfries) replied that the opinion of the Government was that there ought to be an opportunity of discussing the question. The Bill undoubtedly involved the making of large changes.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Then if the Government think it ought to be discussed, are we to pass it without a word of discussion?

SIR. R. T. REID: I was not aware, at the moment, that it had been moved to read the Bill a second time. We certainly do object to its being proceeded with without discussion.

Further consideration of the Bill deferred.

MORTGAGEES' COSTS BILL.

Bill passed through Committee without amendment, and, on Motion of Mr. HALDANE, was read a Third time.

House adjourned at Ten minutes before One o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 20th March 1895.

The House met at Ten minutes after Twelve of the clock.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND) BILL.

MR. T. M. **HEALY** (Louth, N.), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said it had been introduced by Irish Members for more than 20 years, and it was a curious commentary on the alleged ability or willingness of this Parliament to deal with Irish affairs, when it was borne in mind that since the days of Mr. Butt, attempts had been made to pass this measure by one Irish Party or another, and that to-day the question was no further forward in the direction of settlement. He had the curiosity to turn to the Bill brought in by Mr. Butt in 1874. It was backed by Mr. Butt, Sir John Gray, Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. P. J. Smythe. Every one of those gentlemen had passed away, and to-day it might be said that the attempt of the Irish Members to pass this Bill had come of age. It was a remarkable fact that in 21 years the various Irish Parties in the House of Commons had failed to secure a reform which other portions of the country had been in the enjoyment of for 30 or 40 years. There had been no reform of the Municipal Franchise of Ireland, though there had been several reforms of various kinds of Municipal Franchise in this country. The central idea of the Bill was to give every ratepayer a vote in the management of the Borough or the Municipality in which he paid his rates. Every clause in the Bill was already in existence in principle or in substance in English Statutes; and therefore, so far as the principle or the substance were concerned, there was nothing new in the Bill. The principle of the measure was assented to in 1892, by a Conservative Government, and the Bill was read a second time without opposition. The Conservative Government took an objection, which was also taken by the hon. Member for Mid Armagh, to this effect:—

> "We are quite willing to extend the English Franchise to Ireland with regard to 11 towns, but we are not willing to extend it to 111 towns."

In order to see what was the effect of that argument, take the county of Louth as an illustration. If the limited principle, suggested by the then Conservative Government, were sanctioned, the town of Drogheda, which had a Corporation, would get the franchise; but the town of Dundalk, a larger town, would not. To suggest, therefore, that they could or ought to bring in a Bill which could have that effect with regard to two principal towns in the smallest county in Ireland, was a sheer absurdity. Take an illustration—the city of Dublin and its outlying townships. As soon as one passed the canal by the bridges which separated Dublin from Rathmines, he would be passing out of an enfranchised constituency to an unenfranchised constituency, and to suggest that a canal should make all the difference in the franchise was absurd. There were some parts of Dublin not separated from the outlying townships even by a canal; they were separated by the North Circular Road, and the middle of the road was the boundary between the outlying townships and the city. If they applied the principle of the Conservative Government, persons on one side of the street would enjoy a complete franchise, while those on the other side would be unenfranchised. Owing to the number of rating provisions existing in England, the Bill was somewhat long, but it was long because it applied exactly to the English principle. If he had his own way in the matter of drafting the Bill, he would extend the Parliamentary franchise to Municipalities. He believed that before long, as we enfranchised larger masses of the people, the ratepayers would protest against the burden of Parish Councils, Parish Council Rolls, County Council Rolls, Municipal Rolls, and Parliamentary Rolls, and the growing cost of these registers to the electors A common register would have to be discovered in order to save the people the constant expense of registration. He thought that the Conservatives of the City of Dublin were entitled to a larger share in the corporate management than they now enjoyed. In the same way he thought the Roman Catholics in Belfast were entitled to a larger share in the management of Belfast, and he thought that some provision should be devised giving the Nationalists on the one hand and the Conservatives on the other hand a larger control and a larger share in the management of those towns than they at present possessed. But no such principle had been discovered as yet to place on the Statute Book, and it would be an innovation were they to attempt to devise it in this Bill. He concluded by moving the Second Reading of the Bill.

Mr. THOMAS B. CURRAN (Kilkenny) said, that in seconding the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for North Louth, he did so with that amount of diffidence which generally accompanied a maiden speech; in fact, his diffidence was greatly intensified by the knowledge of the fact that he was the youngest Member, not alone of the Irish Parliamentary Party, but the youngest of this Assembly, for which reason he claimed the indulgence which was characteristic of the House. The Bill, as his hon. and learned Friend had shown, demanded nothing of an extravagant nature, but simply asked that the towns in Ireland should have the same system of municipal franchise as existed in England to-day. It related not only to the municipal franchise in corporate towns, but affected the franchise in other towns having a governing body. The system of municipal franchise in Ireland was so grossly absurd and unjust that he could not see how anyone at all open to conviction could countenance its continuance or defend its existence. Why there should be such an unjust and invidious distinction between the system in England and the system in Ireland he could not understand, but unfortunately that distinction did exist; and for that reason this Bill was introduced, to give the House an opportunity of remedying what was nothing short of a glaring anachronism. They were all aware that for many years past in England the occupier of practically any rated premises, no matter of what value, enjoyed the right of a municipal vote, whereas in every one of the 11 corporate towns in Ireland, except Dublin and Belfast, a man to have a vote must occupy premises rated at £10. Now, a £10 rating would frequently, and in very many instances, mean a rent of twice that amount. Speaking on this subject some three years ago, his hon. Friend the junior Member for Cork pointed out that his office in Cork was rated at £10—just high enough to qualify him for a municipal vote—whereas he had to pay a rent of £50 per annum for the same premises. Thus they found this anomalous and indefensible state of affairs, that in rich and prosperous England there was a low and accommodating franchise, whereas in the poorer country (Ireland) there was an enormously high one. In the 11 corporate towns to which he previously referred there were various franchises to the number of three. Did not this appear to hon. Members ridiculous? The Act in reference to the collection of rates aided and abetted, so to speak, the municipal law, for when Parliament passed a special Act for Dublin every householder was given a vote; but then the Collection of Rates Act allowed the vote only to holders of premises valued at £8. In 1892 a Bill to the same effect as this passed the Second Reading with the assent of the Conservative Government. The opposition of the Conservative Party was almost confined to the portion of the Bill dealing with non-corporate towns; but surely it was the poor and needy who mostly wanted the municipal vote to protect their interests? In 99 cases out of 100 did they not find the poor people and the helpless victims of bad sanitation? And to this very class Parliament hitherto, at any rate, denied the municipal vote. Some time ago, through the exertions of the hon. Member for Kerry, Parliament extended the Municipal Franchise to Belfast, but there it was not yet reduced to the English level. Dublin has a special Act, but not one in five Parliamentary voters enjoyed the Municipal Franchise. But if this House under a Conservative Government thought well to extend the franchise to Belfast, why not, he asked, to Cork, and Kilkenny, and Derry? Exceptions were unjustifiable, and Cork, Kilkenny, Derry, Limerick, Waterford, and the other smaller towns had claims to justice and equality. He would like to quote a few figures taken from the Parliamentary returns showing, firstly, the inequality of franchise between Ireland and Great Britain; and, secondly, as between the municipal and Parliamentary franchises in Ireland. In the first instance, Brest had a population of 206,000, and Dublin a population of 249,000. On the Bristol burgess roll there were 27,600 names, and on the Dublin burgess roll only 6,644. Again, Cardiff had a population of 82,000 and 11,400 names on the burgess roll, while Cork had a population of 80,000, but only 2,059 names on the burgess roll. Cambridge had a population of 35,363 and Limerick 38,000, but Cambridge had 5,400 burgesses and Limerick had only 457. Canterbury, with a population of 21,000, had 3,090 burgesses, but Waterford, with a population of 22,000, had only 679 burgesses. Kings Lynn, with a population of 18,000, had 3,302 burgesses, but Kilkenny, with a population of 15,000, had 269 burgesses. He could quote many other instances, but these were samples of the inequality of the Municipal Franchise between Ireland and Great Britain, and he contended that the people in Ireland were as eminently qualified to exercise the Franchise as the people of Great Britain. He would now quote a few instances of the inequality as between the Municipal and Parliamentary Franchise in Ireland. Dublin, with a population of 249,000, had 30,000 names on the Parliamentary Register and 6,644 on the burgess roll. Cork, with a population of 80,000, had 11,500 names on the Parliamentary Register and 2,059 on the burgess roll. Limerick, with a population of 38,000, had 4,927 names on the Parliamentary Register and 457 on the burgess roll. Londonderry with a population of 29,000 had 4,200 names on the Parliamentary Register, and 799 on the burgess roll. Waterford, with a population of 22,000 had 4,000 names on the Parliamentary Register and 679 on the burgess roll; Kilkenny, with a population of 15,000, had 1,756 on the Parliamentary Register and 269 on the burgess roll. These last figures, brought them face to face with a monstrous anomaly. They saw that the occupier of what the late Mr. W. H. Smith called a mud hovel was by law capable of voting for a Member of Parliament, a man who might be called upon to cast his vote in a matter of peace or war, or on something else of urgent Imperial importance, yet when it came to electing a person who was to superintend sanitary arrangements and the repairing and watering the streets of a town, the mud-cabin was considered incapable, and consequently denied a vote. The injustice and anomalies this Bill sought to remedy has time after time been brought under the notice of the House. No Member of the House had ever set up a tolerable defence for the existing ridiculous state of affairs. Their grievance had been admitted, but nothing had been done, notwithstanding the almost innumerable occasions they had sought the legislative intervention of Parliament. Surely a broad Municipal Franchise was not an extravagant demand. Time after time the Municipal Laws in Great Britain had been altered and changed, and changed and altered again, until it was now in a fairly satisfactory condition, but for the last 50 years the Irish Municipal Law had been left undisturbed with all its glaring defects. Surely, at the eleventh hour they might hope for the alterations the Bill suggested. There was nothing extravagant in what they asked. They simply asked Parliament to extend to Ireland those rights of citizenship which were exercised and enjoyed in every other portion of the United Kingdom. They asked, in the interests chiefly of the working people, the health of whose homes so largely depended on the good administration of the cities in which they dwelt.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, the hon. Member who had just resumed his seat described himself as the youngest Member of the House. He trusted it might not be regarded as presumptuous on the part of one who had been longer in the House if he ventured to compliment the hon. Gentleman upon the ability of his speech and upon the contribution he had made to the debating power of the House. And he hoped, too, that this, coming from an English Member, would not be regarded as a new Irish grievance. He wished to say a few words on this Bill, first, as an English Member who had taken some interest in municipal matters; and, secondly, as one who had always felt that upon the question of local government in Ireland that there was a necessity for co-operation on the part of both English and Irish Members. Local Government had been conferred widely, and he thought wisely, upon both England and Scotland, and he assumed that had been done in consequence of the advantage which it was calculated to confer on both those countries, and, though he admitted there might be certain points of difference between the conditions, he was not prepared to assent to the proposition that the differences and the dissimilarities were so great that what had been done here could, in principle, be refused in the case of Ireland. On the contrary, he, as an English Member, welcomed this step towards a unity of the laws of the different branches of the Kingdom, and he was sorry to hear the hon. and learned Member who moved the Second Reading suggest that the Conservative Party had been indisposed to discuss such a measure. For his own part he had desired to do this upon his Amendment on the Address in favour of Local Government for Ireland, and also upon the recent Irish Guardians Franchise Bill, the principle of which, assimilating the laws of England and Ireland, he also supported. He remembered that on the occasion of the last Debate there was a consensus of opinion in favour of the principle of this Bill. [Mr. T. M. HEALY: "Who blocked it?"] He believed in discussion and not in blocking discussion, a view which he knew was shared by many Conservatives. His view was that the only possible standing ground for Unionists with reference to the government of Ireland was that they should be willing to afford facilities for redressing and remedying abuses and anomalies, and to show they believed the British Parliament was not only willing but capable of doing justice by dealing with matters of this description. He had always maintained that the position of local government generally in Ireland was absolutely indefensible. He gave a general and a hearty support to the Bill of 1892 on the ground that it at least made an attempt, though he admitted an attempt with some few blemishes, with safeguards which he thought were illusory, but which could have been materially modified in Committee, and he did so because he thought a reform of local government in Ireland, apart from all other considerations as affecting the various branches of the Kingdom, was a right which was due to the people of that country, and one which ought to be conceded, not, as usual, under pressure and by peacemeal, but readily and on broad practical principles, and, in that Bill, the franchise, the areas, &c., to be at least wide and right. Who would attempt to justify the present position of county government in Ireland? Who could say that, while England and Scotland had representative institutions for local government, nomination by the sheriff of a county of a grand jury, which had no continuity and only a spasmodic existence for a day or two from year to year, was a satisfactory state of things? In the case of Ireland an Act of Parliament was required to authorise even the building of a new court house. Who could say that was a condition of things which ought to be maintained for an hour longer than the time required to make a reform of a state of things which, apart from any imperial considerations, was indefensible in itself? Were there not anomalies of the most extraordinary character in Ireland which demanded redress? Was it a desirable state of government in Ireland that in so many cases it should depend upon the terms of particular Acts of Parliament instead of upon some general law? That there should be in Ireland franchises varying in almost all amounts, that there should be varieties of qualification; and differences existing between the very groundwork of the franchises in the different towns; that there were gross anachronisms and survivals, and, in the non-municipal towns, scarcely any sanitary powers at all, were to his mind reasons which were conclusive in favour of the making of the change in principle, reserving details, and as an instalment of reformed local government, which was desired by the Bill. But perhaps the greatest anomaly of all was that, while Ireland was in the enjoyment of household suffrage so far as Parliamentary institutions were concerned, when it became a question of attending to a local drain or of care for the health of the people in a particular locality, it should be supposed that the comparatively rich only had an interest in the welfare of the people. Why should Ireland and Scotland, or Yorkshire, have to come to London at all for such purely domestic and local purposes? He was not making any invidious distinction between the rich and poor, but, after all, the rich could, in time of danger from disease, fly to more healthy localities, while the poor, because of their employment and their families, were anchored to the place in which they worked and resided. It therefore became necessary that opportunities should be afforded for the expression at municipal elections of the views of those who, like the poor, had such a deep interest in the health and strength of the localities in which they passed their lives. It was an undoubted fact that large portions of the urban populations of Ireland were absolutely excluded from the opportunity of expressing their opinions on municipal affairs, and accordingly, in his view, no real objection could be raised to the principal provisions of the Bill. It should be remembered that Local Government was successful according as it conduced to the health of the people; for there were no measures of more vital import to the community than those which had for their object the narrowing of the kingdoms of disease and death. When the Bill was last before the House, in 1892, Irish Members of both Parties supported it, and the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh (Mr. Barton) almost alone presented two objections to it. One was that in many of the towns the burgesses would be taken by surprise. That objection might have been well founded in 1892; but it could not now apply, after the full discussion of the measure in that year. The other objection was that the Bill contained new clauses; but the clauses of this Bill were practically the same as the clauses of the Bill of 1892. The hon. and learned Member also urged in 1892 that the Bill should be limited to the 11 Municipalities of Ireland. But no real ground could be advanced for making such a distinction. It was obvious that it would widen the sense of injustice felt in Ireland, and would also increase the anomalies of Irish municipal law, instead of assimilating it to the English local franchise. The point was, moreover, only one as to the form, not as to the substance, of local administration, since incorporation made no real distinction from a sanitary point of view. He himself would apply the Parliamentary franchise in every branch of the Kingdom equally and solely for local purposes. He would also support the Motion to refer the Bill to the Grand Committee, because he believed such a course was calculated to expedite its progress and to give the fullest opportunities for the discussion of any of its provisions to which objection might be taken. Moreover, there was need of much more devolution, both in and out of Parliament, and all round. Exception might be taken to some of its details, and the question of rating might demand consideration, differing as it did in England and Ireland, and contracts having been based on that difference, but he ventured to say that to the principle of the Bill no exception could be taken. It proposed to give to Ireland advantages which England and Scotland already enjoyed. There was no real ground for the distinctions between the countries in those matters, and those distinctions only strengthened that particularism to which some of them objected. The best and strongest attitude for the House to adopt was that everything they believed to be wise for England would presumably be wise for Ireland, that practical equality, so far as possible, was equity, and that the Imperial Parliament was willing to apply to Ireland laws which benefited the other branches of a United Kingdom.

*MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick) trusted that those Conservative Members who were constantly declaring that they were desirous to put Ireland on an equal footing with England in regard to beneficial laws, would follow the example of the hon. Member for South Islington, and support this effort of the Irish Members to have the English municipal law extended to Ireland. Indeed, he could not imagine how any level-headed and sensible man who posed either as a Liberal Unionist or a Conservative could object to the measure, seeing that it merely proposed to introduce into Ireland municipal laws that had existed for a long time in England. The deepest dissatisfaction prevailed amongst the artisans, not only of Dublin, but of all the towns and cities of Ireland, with the existing state of the municipal franchise. It was, certainly, most preposterous and absurd that a man who could vote for a Member of Parliament was, at the same time, disqualified for voting for a municipal representative. But though the absurdity was great in the cities and towns, it was much worse in the townships around Dublin. He happened to live in what was called a fashionable suburb of Dublin, the township of Blackrock, in which the light of the Conservative and Unionist intellect threw a beam all round. That particular township had existed for 30 years before there was a revision of the voters. The whole matter had been left in the hands of the town clerk, who was supposed to monopolise all the intellect, education, and political energy of the township. The existing municipal law in Ireland was full of anomalies. In one of the townships around Dublin the rating qualification for the franchise was £10; and the residential qualification two years. In the next township, separated from the first only by a single street, the rating qualification was £8, and the residential qualification 18 months. In a third township the rating qualification was £6, and the residential qualification one year. In fact, the whole thing was a Chinese puzzle, and it would take the Lord Chancellor himself—for the revising barristers were unable to do it—to unravel the distinctions in municipal qualifications that were scattered all over Ireland. As he had said, the legal gentlemen who had to administer the municipal law were unable to give clear decisions upon the extraordinary Acts of Parliament passed by this House for Ireland. The present Bill would do away with all those puzzling anomalies, by establishing one municipal law which would embrace the whole country.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON (Armagh, Mid) said, it was apparent from the language used by the supporters of the Bill that an onslaught upon its principle generally was expected, but though he did not mean to carry his objection to the extent of opposing the Second Reading, there were many points upon which criticism might be fairly offered. Four of the towns which would be affected by the Bill were in his constituency, and as far as he knew not one of them desired, while one of them would certainly object to the provisions of this measure. With the general observation of the hon. Member for South Islington everyone would agree, and if this were a resolution in favour of the assimilation of the municipal institutions in Ireland and England he would not rise to discuss it. The Member for Islington had made a benevolent speech in favour of the general prospect of assimilation between the institutions of the two countries. But he (Mr. Barton) happened to represent four towns that would be affected by this Bill; his constituents lived in a work-a-day world, they could not afford to indulge in this general spirit of benevolence, and he thought if this Bill was not a general resolution but a Bill which it would be endeavoured to pass, no one would dispute that he was entitled to criticise it as a Bill and not as a general resolution. The hon. Member for Islington said, this Bill followed the English analogies; but that was precisely what it did not do. If it did, he himself should have little objection to it. He did not object to the whole question being dealt with in a large and statesmanlike manner, but this was a Bill which dealt with it in a fragmentary and piecemeal way, parts of the English legislation being pitchforked together for Ireland without the contracts which accompanied the English Bills, and which ought to accompany any Bill of this kind for Ireland. He complimented the seconder of the Motion on his speech, in which he dealt fairly with the subject; and, indeed, against the speech he had nothing to say. If this Bill was confined to the 11 municipal corporations, and if it dealt with them as they were dealt with by the English Act of 1882, he would not rise to oppose the Bill. But it did not do anything of the kind. It was not confined to the municipal corporations, but it proposed to introduce 100 other towns, some of them so small as to be almost villages—towns with 1,100 and 1,200 inhabitants, or with just the limit of population of 1,500, to bring them within the Towns Improvement Act. He remembered on one occasion being about to leave one of these towns, and he was entreated to defer his departure for a day, because else their census returns would show a decrease within the 1,500 limit. In the inclusion of these small towns the Bill did not follow the English analogy. In England the Act was accompanied by a codification and consolidation of the law, and dealt with it in such a manner that the Government draftsman was occupied for two years in carrying it out. These small towns in Ireland ought to be dealt with in connection with the reform of Local Government for counties, Municipal Corporations being dealt with by themselves on a basis suitable to their circumstances. There were many questions closely connected with the Franchise which had to be dealt with when the English Act was passed—incidence of rating, boundaries, and other matters that could not be left out of view, and these matters were dealt with in consideration of the circumstances existing, but different to those in Ireland. There was no attempt in the Bill to alter the elastic Irish system of 1840, but there was a putting of new wine into old bottles which would be attended with the inconveniences attending such a proceeding. In the smaller Irish towns, such as the principal town he represented, the principle was followed that there should be a £5 rating franchise, and nobody was rated who had not the franchise; but with this Bill would come in a wholly different state of things, though the incidence of rating would remain. As to the qualifying period, he would be surprised to find any analogy to the three months' residential qualification in the English Act.

MR. T. M. HEALY explained that this was adapted from last year's Act for Kingstown and Blackrock.

MR. BARTON said, after being told, as he had been by one hon. Member, that Blackrock was a type of irregularities and anomalies, it was rather an unfortunate precedent. In 1878 a Committee dealt with this subject, and occupied three years in taking evidence and preparing its Report, and in their recommendations they advised that a distinction should be made between corporate towns and small towns, some of the latter being admitted to the list of corporate towns, but the main body of them, the Committee reported, could not be appropriately treated as corporate towns. In 1892 this distinction was pointed out by Mr. Hadden, then Irish Attorney General, who, on behalf of the late Government, offered no opposition to the principle that the Municipal Franchise in Ireland should be assimilated to that in England; but he said the measure for effecting this should be accompanied with proposals for dealing with the small towns in a system of county government. But a Local Government Bill for Ireland hon. Members below the Gangway had refused, and now they proposed to deal with the subject, inverting the proper order of proceeding, and dealing with it in a fragmentary and unbusiness-like way. The question of administration in small towns was closely allied to, and ought to be considered in connection with, that of county government. The two ought, therefore, to be dealt with together, and the smaller towns not included in a Bill having reference to Municipal Corporations, which they could not be safely and conveniently dealt with at the same time. He thought the occupation of Wednesday in the discussion of such Bills as the present one, and that of the previous Wednesday, was very inconvenient, and really a mere waste of time. The practice was growing of endeavouring, particularly on those occasions, to obtain assent to the general principles in a Bill, though the Bill itself might be crude and incomplete as this was, and then sending it to a Grand Committee, for which the Bill was unsuitable. There had been some experience of those Committees.

MR. T. M. HEALY rose to order, on the ground that the hon. and learned Member could not enter upon the question of Grand Committees; for it would be anticipating a discussion on a subsequent Motion.

MR. BARTON said, he did not intend to go into that point, and then repeated his objections to the Bill. Speaking on behalf of the towns in his constituency, he was bound to say that the people did not want the Bill, and believed that it would be most unjust to apply it to them, unless it was accompanied by an alteration in the incidence of the rates. He hoped also, in the interests of the smaller towns in Ireland, that the Bill would not be passed into law. The Bill, as he had said, embodied a general proposition which nobody disputed, but it was crude and inadequate in its details. He thought, moreover, that a Bill of this kind ought to be brought in on the responsibility of the Government, if it was to bring about any effective and general reform.

Mr. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) said, the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh, was evidently in favour of general resolutions embodying general principles, and his only objection was as to the process by which these principles could be passed into law. He did not know any means by which this could be done, except by introducing Bills into the House; and so far as the Nationalist Members were concerned, they had no other opportunity of doing so, and of giving practical effect to their views than by taking advantage of the Wednesday sitting. The hon. and learned Member seemed to take up a peculiar position in this matter. He had stated that he had no objection to the principle of the Bill, or to the extension of the franchise to the corporate towns, or even to the smaller towns, only that in the latter case it should be accompanied by a reform of Local Government.

Mr. BARTON said, he objected to the proposed extension of the franchise unless it was accompanied by an alteration in the incidence of rating, without which it would not be fair to those who paid the rates.

Mr. HARRINGTON said, it would be easy to meet that difficulty, but the practical way of coming to the purpose was first to help them to pass the Bill through its present stage, and then to help in amending it in Grand Committee if necessary. He and his colleagues were as anxious as the hon. and learned Member for a reform of Local Government, and that this extension of the franchise should be used for the purposes of Local Government, but were people to be excluded from the franchise in regard to such small portion of the Local Government as they now had? Another objection urged against the Bill by the hon. and learned Member was on the ground of procedure, because it did not follow the English analogy, but that objection had really no weight. It was true that municipal corporations were differently dealt with, but they stood in the same position as ever so far as Local Government was concerned; and all the arguments the hon. Member derived from the recommendations of the Committee of 1878 were of no value, inasmuch as the condition of things the Committee dealt with had now passed away. The hon. Member had stated that in his constituency were four towns affected by the Bill, and that one of them, at all events, strongly objected to be included in it. He should like to know what section of the people of that town objected to the Bill, and in what way expression had been given to the objection. Was it the section that already enjoyed the franchise, and would refuse it to others? There were one or two points in the Bill which he himself felt induced to criticise, and with which he would deal in detail at a future stage. In the first place, he regretted that the Bill was not made purely a measure for assimilating the municipal to the Parliamentary franchise; for as he read the Bill now one of the sections would have the effect of excluding the lodger franchise in the different towns. There was one clause in the Bill which he feared would not operate very well for the purpose for which it was intended. One of the provisions, following the English Act, provided that the occupier of a house might pay the rates in a case in which the landlord refused or neglected to pay them. With regard to a separate house that provision might operate fairly, but in the case of a tenement house occupied by several persons it would be absurd to ask a man who occupied only one or two rooms to pay the rates for the entire house in order under this Bill to secure the franchise. There was one other provision in the Bill to which he objected, and it was that which included women suffrage. All through he had been an opponent of that proposal, and he was bound to say that he did not see that any great body of public opinion in Ireland was in favour of it. Therefore, he felt it necessary to say that if the provision was retained in the Bill at a future stage, be should not be able to support it. He trusted, however, that the Second Reading of the Bill would be now agreed to.

Mr. W. E. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) said, an hon. Member had explained that there had been no Legislation on this question in regard to Ireland for 21 years, but that was not so much the fault of the House as that there had been no strong body of public opinion in Ireland to demand it. Nor did he think there was any strong demand for the present proposals. At all events the Committee of 1878, which investigated the whole question of Municipal Government in the corporate towns of Ireland, declared that they were not able to find that there was any large body of public opinion in favour of an extension of the franchise. He agreed that the circumstances had very considerably altered with regard to the main provisions of the Bill; but he would suggest that the reason why this question had not been forced upon the attention of Parliament was that there had been no great popular opinion behind it in Ireland. He did not say that the system which at present existed was defensible, and he was not at all opposed to the principle of the Bill so far as it applied to the municipal towns. He believed that the reason there was no desire in the small towns for the extension of the municipal franchise was that no hardship had been felt by the inhabitants. If they had suffered hardship it was inconceivable that they should have put no pressure upon their Parliamentary representatives, and he had never heard among his own constituents of any desire that there should be an alteration in the form of government. If the franchise was given to these small towns the House would be flying in direct opposition to the deliberate expression of opinion by the last Committee of the House which investigated this matter, and before that was done he thought further inquiries ought to be made as to whether those who lived in these towns desired to see the system altered. He thought also that these small towns ought to be dealt with under the Local Government Act, and ought to form part of the ordinary County Government. For these reasons he should at the proper time object to the particular clauses which proposed to include them, and he thought that there should be some definite provision in the Bill by which the small towns should be excluded from the extension of government under the Bill unless they desired themselves to have it.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I think very few remarks from me will suffice in dealing with the proposal now before the House, because, with one remarkable exception, all the Gentlemen representing Irish constituencies are prepared to agree to the Second Reading of this Bill. I think the difference in tone between the hon. Member for Islington and the two representatives of Irish Conservatism, the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh and the hon. Member who has just spoken, is a contrast which ought not to be lost on the hon. Member for Islington himself. He will now see, and it is a pity that English Unionists cannot more clearly comprehend, the difference in tone, the difference in political view, and the difference in the equalisation of political rights in Ireland and that which prevails amongst the better class of English Conservatives. If he has listened to the speeches of the hon. Members for Mid Armagh and Antrim he will recognise what it is that makes the Gentlemen sitting behind him who represent Ireland so much more bitter in their politics than English Radicals are, generally speaking, in reference to English politics. That is because the views of the majority of the people in Ireland, when it is attempted to press them upon this House, are encountered, not by what I may call an enlightened Conservative Opposition, but by the old ascendency doctrine, which means nothing less than the preservation of all those privileges which we in England regard as privileges which ought no longer to be preserved.

MR. BARTON said, he never based his argument upon any suggestion of ascendency in Ireland, but on the plain grounds of Irish life.

MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. and learned Member is far too accomplished a disputant to think of basing his argument on ascendency in Ireland, but what I am pointing out is that an Irish Conservative takes an entirely different point of view from that which is taken by Conservatives in this country. The hon. and learned Member declares that Wednesday afternoons are now being systematically wasted in this House, and asked why were not gentlemen from Ireland content with bringing in a general resolution. Well, we know perfectly well what would happen in that case; the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh would have got up and said:—

> "Why do not hon. Members bring in a Bill? Let us see how the subject looks when it is worked out in its details."

We know that method of Parliamentary tactics perfectly well. An hon. Member said that he wished Bills of this kind brought before the House in order that the British electors might see that this House is capable and willing to deal with Irish questions; the Bill that we are discussing this afternoon is exactly a case in point. The hon. and learned Member who introduced this Bill reminded the House that similar proposals, if not exactly the same in detail, have been brought before the House from the days of Mr. Butt, 21 years ago. Last week the Member for Manchester admitted that it was undeniable that the reform of the Grand Jury has been for 50 years, year after year, brought before this House; and this Bill used to be called a hardy annual. Here is an admitted grievance so gross that gentlemen opposite will not venture to divide on the Second Reading of the Bill. They admit the grievance, and yet for 21 years it has been pressed on the attention of the House without any effect whatever, and unless the House agrees to the proposal to refer the Bill to a Grand Committee this afternoon will be wasted. It depends on the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh and his friends whether the afternoon shall have been wasted or not. The hon. Member for Antrim said there was no strong measure of support in Irish opinion; well, now, if that were so, can you really suppose that all these gentlemen from Ireland would come forward with proposals of this kind year after year? The argument that the people interested do not desire the extension of the franchise has been used in reference to every extension of the franchise; but I do not believe for one moment that the hon. Member will tell me that in the City of Londonderry, for instance, there is no feeling amongst the population—the Catholic population I was going to call them—to have the franchise extended. The hon. Member was aware, I am sure, of the remarkable figures quoted by the hon. Member for Kilkenny in a speech which I should like to say was certainly one of the most excellent ever addressed to this House. It is an instance of how wisdom will sometimes come from the mouths of babes and sucklings. But will the hon. Member for South Antrim believe that in the city of Dublin there are 30,000 names on the Parliamentary Register, and only 6,400 on the Burgess Roll? Is he aware that at Limerick there are more than 10 times as many names on the Parliamentary Register as on the Burgess Roll? Is it to be conceived that in cases of that kind, where the numbers on the Parliamentary Roll are out of all proportion to the numbers on the Burgess Roll, there is no feeling on the part of those on the Parliamentary Roll, who are not on the Burgess Roll, of exclusion? Ireland is no doubt a queer country; but it would be monstrous if such exclusion as that should exist without a feeling on the part of those excluded of a desire to remedy the grievance which has been pointed out.

Mr. MACARTNEY said, he did not push his argument as far as that. He was willing to admit that in Londonderry and other places there was a popular feeling in favour of the Bill. But, speaking generally, he submitted that there was no strong feeling in favour of the alterations proposed in the Bill.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The House must judge of the probability for themselves. Now a word as to the Bill. The hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh said it was crude, fragmentary, and piecemeal. All Bills are crude, fragmentary and piecemeal which one desires to see rejected. But after comparing this Bill, which I have done carefully with those more competent than I am to discuss the details, I say that, so far from being crude, piecemeal, or fragmentary, it is—what I perfectly admit we do not always get on Wednesday afternoons from Gentlemen below the Gangway—a scientific Bill, dealing with details most carefully and elaborately. It is, I am told, excellently drafted, and it is such a scheme as the Government themselves might bring forward. There has been no Bill brought forward in the House this Session, either by the Government or a Private Member, to which the words "crude, fragmentary, and piecemeal," could be less justly applied. It supplies a new Local Government Franchise all over Ireland, primarily for the municipal boroughs, and the broad feature of it is that the municipal franchise is to go with the occupation and rating of premises irrespective of value and irrespective of the payment of rates actually by the occupier. No doubt one of the most important provisions is that the occupier's name is to appear on the rate-book, and even where he is not rated the occupier, but is occupying rated premises. This will do a great deal to assimilate the law in Ireland to the law in England. The provision is borrowed direct from the Poor Rate Assessment Act, which is an English Act, and which was extended to Parliament for Parliamentary purposes in 1884. This Bill extends the change to the Parliamentary Franchise. I can only say I cordially agree with that proposition. These proposals are the proposals made by the Government in their Registration Bill of 1893, and in the Bill which I myself had the honour of bringing forward last year, called the Period of Qualification Bill. They are not taken *verbatim* from these Bills, but contain the spirit of them.

Mr. BARTON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman meant that the franchise given by the Act of 1884 was the same as the English franchise. He believed it would be found to apply only to the franchise given to municipal corporations and only three months' qualification was required.

Mr. J. MORLEY: There may be a difference either in the occupation or period. But I am afraid I have not studied the Bill minutely enough to say. Generally speaking, however, I believe that what I have said is true and accurate. There is one proposal which makes an important change—it is in the concluding Clause of the Bill, which enables women, married or single, to vote in local matters. That, of course, is an English provision. It is not now the law in Ireland. It is a matter entirely for Irish sentiment to settle.

Mr. T. M. HEALY was understood to say it was the law in Kingstown and Blackrock.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Well, it is a matter for Irish sentiment to settle. But, so far as the English analogy goes, that analogy would be in favour of the provisions of the Bill. Reference has been made during the Debate to the attitude of the Conservative Government in 1892. The Irish Attorney-General of that day said the Government approved of the Bill as far as it affected the 12 Municipal Boroughs. But then it has been said, the proper way to deal with the other places not Municipal Boroughs is to deal with them in connection with the general reform of County Government in Ireland. Here I would remind the House that when the right hon. Member for East Manchester brought in his Local Government Bill, the day after the Attorney-General made that statement, the Bill contained no provision of the kind we proposed in the Municipal Franchise Bill of 1892, or that is proposed in this Bill. The Local Government Bill brought in by the Conservative Government in 1892 refused to deal with places outside the 12 Municipal Boroughs. Therefore, when we are referring to the general reform of Local Government, the only Party, I venture to say, in the House who will ever attempt the reform of Local Government in Ireland as distinct from the larger and more organic reform to which the Liberal Party is pledged, the only Party to whom local reformers may look, is the Party led by the right hon. Gentleman, and he has shown by the course he took with reference to the Local Government Bill of 1892, that he, at all events, does not, when the opportunity is presented to him, intend to deal with the question of the 111 outside small towns in the way this Bill desires to deal with it, and as to which there is practical unanimity in the House this afternoon. I need add nothing more, except that the Government warmly approve of the Bill and hope it will go to a Second Reading without a Division. As to the subsequent step, I would only say we thoroughly approve of the proposition of the hon. Member.

Sir T. LEA (Londonderry) said, that until the right hon. Gentleman spoke he was under the impression that there was complete unanimity with regard to the measure. But he spoke in a bitter tone of the hon. Member who spoke on behalf of the Conservative Members, and he heard what he said with regret. If the Bill were to pass unanimously this Session it could only be by a consensus of opinion that as an abstract theory it was right. When a Bill was unanimously accepted by the House, was it to be referred to the Standing Committee on Law? Who was it who prevented this and similar measures passing into law? The Government professed to be in favour of the Bill, but they took the whole time of the House, and prevented them from reaching future stages of Bills. He wanted to know whether the Government would allow private Members time for this and similar Bills, so that these discussions on Wednesday afternoons might not be wasted and fruitless.

Motion agreed to.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Law.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): On Wednesday last I pointed out grave objections to a similar proposition in reference to a Bill which also proposed changes in the system of Local Government in Ireland, about which we were principally in agreement that something should be done. I have not the same strenuous and serious objection to make to this Bill, which deals with what is an admitted grievance, but I venture again to enter my protest against the course which the Government are now apparently habitually driven to accept, which is to send measures of a controversial character, or which may become of a controversial character, to be dealt with by a body of men who are not called together for any such purpose, and whose organisation utterly unfits them for effectively dealing with controversial matters. There was a letter in the *Times* only a day or two ago from one of the Chairmen of Grand Committees—the right hon. Member for Denbighshire. I did not read it myself, but if the contents have been rightly represented to me, he complained that it was perfectly impossible for the Chairman to adequately order these Grand Committees, or see that the business was rapidly and decorously carried out. That may be, and I think is, a small matter when you are dealing with technical and comparatively non-controversial Bills, but it becomes a serious matter when you are dealing with Bills of large scope, such as are entrusted to the Government to bring in, and which are hardly ever passed under the guidance of a private Member. It is quite true that the Bill does not present, in any of its main features, a large surface of attack; but all who know anything about Ireland must be aware that there are always subsidiary points which sometimes raise the bitterest controversy; and these should not be left to the decision of such a tribunal as our Grand Committees have proved themselves to be. I do not think it is likely that the Bill will pass through the Grand Committee absolutely without amendment; but it will be the object of the majority to secure that result; and look at the monstrous injustice that will be done if the House be deprived of the opportunity of dealing with it on its subsequent stages. I understand that, if a Bill goes through a Grand Committee without amendment, the Report stage is altogether avoided and the House may be asked at once to pass the Third Reading. I am told that this is what has actually happened with regard to one Bill of which the details were not discussed on the Second Reading; it has gone through the Grand Committee without any amendment whatever. The result is that this House may be and will be called upon to pass the Third Reading without having had any opportunity of passing a judgment upon the details of the Bill. I do not think this is the way in which a large and important question like the government of Ireland ought to be treated. For these reasons I venture to protest on broad grounds against a course to which I infer the Government are giving their support. I should be doing wrong if I remained silent, and if I allowed the Motion to pass without expressing the general view of policy on this particular question which I have always strongly entertained.

Mr. J. MORLEY: As the right hon. Gentleman is not going to divide against the Motion, which I am glad to hear, I need not make more than one or two remarks on what has fallen from him. I may point out that, if this is not a Bill which can be referred with advantage to a Grand Committee, it is perfectly clear that no Irish Bill ever can be so referred. I cannot conceive of any Irish Bill coming to and passing through this House less bristling with contentious points, or, to use the right hon, Gentleman's own phrase, exposing a less surface to attack. Therefore, if a Bill of this kind cannot go to a Grand Committee, no Irish Bill can do that. But what a serious position to take—serious, that is, from the right hon. Gentleman's point of view, but not from mine—that no Irish Bill is to go through the House unless it goes through Committee stage in the whole House. That would suit my view very well, because the result would be that not half so many Irish Bills would get through the House, and that would give support to my contention that this House is not capable, from want of knowledge, of making good laws for Ireland. That proposition would receive immense support from the following of the course which the right hon. Gentleman's tactics would involve.

MR. BALFOUR: Of course I do not accept the conclusion that no Irish Bill should be referred to a Grand Committee.

MR. J. MORLEY: I quite understand that, but I put it to the right hon. Gentleman whether he can imagine any sort of Bill which could be less contentious than this. I can discover in it abundant grounds for differences of opinion, but nothing like grounds for those exasperating contentions with which we are familiar upon Irish subjects. The right hon. Gentleman is right in saying that, if the Bill were to pass through the Grand Committee without amendment, then the House would have no further voice in the matter until the third reading; but, if there were any serious abuse of the powers of the majority in the Grand Committee, any tyrannical overriding of the minority, it is open to the House to recommit the Bill, and it would be in the power of the House to discuss every clause in it. I think the position taken by the right hon. Gentleman is rather dangerous from his own point of view, though not at all from the point of view of the Home Rulers; but I am glad that he assents to this proposal.

MR. MACARTNEY said, the Bill was only circulated on Monday, and time ought to be allowed for its consideration by the local authorities interested before it was proceeded with by the Grand Committee.

Motion agreed to.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL.

MR. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock) rose to move the Second Reading of this Bill. He said that the subject with which it dealt was admittedly one of great importance. Justices of the Peace had to transact a large part of the judicial business of the country, and they were also intrusted with a comparatively large share of administrative work. The constitution of the Magisterial Benches was, in the opinion of many people, unsatisfactory at present. The system under which appointments were made was out of date. The Lord Chancellor had the power of appointing to the Judicial Bench both in town and country, but he acted in two different ways. For towns the appointments were made by the Lord Chancellor of the day upon the recommendation of men who belonged to the Party to which he belonged himself. These recommendations were, in fact, made by the wire-pullers of the Party which was in Office. Political considerations thus affected appointments which ought to be free from political influences. A man was often recommended for appointment as a reward for mere pecuniary Party services, for the contribution of so much money to the funds. Appointments to county Benches were now made upon the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant or upon the recommendation of the Member or candidate for a constituency. Here again Party considerations entered where they ought not to enter, men being appointed on account of their political opinions. As long as Lords Lieutenant, who were mostly Members of the House of Lords, should possess the power of recommending persons to the Lord Chancellor, so long would Party and social considerations enter into this question. But people ought to be chosen to sit on the Bench on the grounds of fitness and capacity. Because a man possessed great wealth, it did not follow that he was better qualified to discharge the important functions of a Justice of the Peace than a man of more modest means. Too often under the existing system men were appointed, not because they were suited to the Bench, but because the Bench was supposed to be suited to their position. It would be remembered that about this time last year a deputation waited upon the Lord Chancellor, and asked that his hands should be strengthened and that he should be allowed to appoint directly to the Bench without the intervention of the Lord Lieutenant, and the Lord Chancellor then said:—

> "That the constitution of the Bench in many counties was extremely unsatisfactory and prejudical to the public interest, that Lords Lieutenant were too much in the hands of the local magistrates, and that the present system was in many cases virtually one of co-optation, subject to political proclivities."

He might be told that a change had been introduced since that time, but the change was not completely satisfactory. The Lord Chancellor had now the power to appoint directly, it was true, but it was impossible for him to make appointments which would be satisfactory to all the inhabitants of a county. The Lord Chancellor was, after all, a Member of the Government of the day, and as such, it was extremely difficult for him to make other than political appointments. In his opinion the best way to exclude Party considerations from these appointments, would be to allow the representatives of the people in different localities to make nominations to the Lord Chancellor, a power of veto being given to him in order that he might prevent men from sitting on the Bench who were not fitted for the position. The power of recommendation ought to rest solely with the representatives of the people. Then arose the question, which were the best local bodies to intrust with this power? It might be argued that the smaller bodies ought to be chosen, because they were more in touch with the localities which they represented. On the other hand, it might be thought that it would be better to choose a body responsible to the whole county in respect of county matters. His proposal was that the County Council should make nominations to the Lord Chancellor, and that if the chairman of a District Council should send up names to the County Council, such names should be considered by the County Council for recommendation. This would insure the County Councils keeping in touch with the wants of the districts. He proposed, then, to empower the Town and County Councils to make the nominations, and the Bill provided for the formation of committees, to be called "Nominating Committees," and to consist of not less than four and not more than ten Councillors. Upon these Committees would be the Chairmen of County Councils and Mayors of Town Councils, and it would be the business of the nominating Committees to nominate men who were suitable for the positions of justices of the peace. The Lord Chancellor would have the power to veto any unsuitable person, but neither he nor the Lord Lieutenant would be able to place on the Bench any man who was not nominated by the representatives of the people in their district. The Bill proposed to remove any Magistrate who had not attended once in the year, unless within twelve months he furnished a sufficient excuse for such non-attendance to the Lord Chancellor. It was further proposed to entirely abolish the property qualification, and he thought both sides would agree that it ought to be abolished in all these appointments. Men should be chosen, not because of the amount of property they possessed, but because of their hearts and brains, and because they were people who were considered best able to manage the affairs of their localities, or perform the functions attaching to the position of a justice of the peace. It was not work which required any great ability, but it did require that those who performed it should be men possessed of common sense, fair-minded, and of good, sound judgment. Again, what they required to have on their benches were men of all classes of society. The fault of their system today was that the justices did not represent all classes. They were too much of one class. They had got the Bench full of the land-owning class, with only a few tradesmen, who had been appointed lately. What they wanted were men of all classes, and they might depend upon it the Bench would not be sufficiently respected by the people of the country, and be in touch with the feelings, wants, and desires of the masses of the people until this change was brought about. He did not make any accusations against the present justices of the peace. He believed they were men who were faithfully doing their duty, and giving up a large amount of their valuable time in order that they might devote attention to the administration of the judicial affairs of the country. He thought they ought to be proud that they had men who were willing to give up so much of their time at no expense to the country. But he contended that on account of the position of these men they were not able to look at questions in the same way as many of the humbler people of the country could. A man, for instance, who was a great sportsman, would be rather apt to look upon poaching as too great an offence. Many of their justices regarded the matters which were brought before them with, perhaps, too narrow a view. They wanted on the Bench not only the landowners of the country, but the tradesmen of the country, not only people belonging to one church, but people of different views as to religion, so that when questions came up they might be looked at, not with one set of eyes alone, but that many sets of eyes and different views might be brought to bear upon the consideration of the matters arising. If their Benches were now more representative of the people they would, he was convinced, be more highly respected by the people, and it was because he was anxious to make the Bench more in touch with the people, and more widely composed of men of different opinions and views that he had no hesitation in submitting this Bill for the consideration of the House, and he hoped they should pass it.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.) supported the Bill. In Committee on the Local Government Bill of 1888, he observed, he moved an Amendment which proposed substantially to give the nominations for Justices of the Peace in counties to the County Councils. He entirely agreed with his hon. Friend that the modification of that proposal adopted in the Bill—namely, that though the nomination should be made by the County Council, the work of selection, should be entrusted to a Committee of the County Council, was a very desirable one. The Amendment he moved in 1888 was really disinterred from a Bill brought in more than 50 years previously. It was, substantially, an original clause in the Municipal Corporations Bill of 1836, as brought in by Lord John Russell. It was defeated in the House of Lords, but as far back as the time when the Liberal Government proposed to reform their municipal corporations, that democratic proposal was introduced by Lord John Russell that the County Council for any borough should nominate as many persons as it thought fit, to be placed on the Commission of the Peace for the borough. His hon. Friend had referred to the very important new departure which had been made upon the Resolution of this House by the Lord Chancellor. During the last two or three years most Members, he had no doubt, had been called upon more or less to take some part in reference to the work of selection by the Lord Chancellor, and he was bound to say that anything more invidious than that duty he did not think it possible to conceive, nor, in his opinion, could there be a position so unsatisfactory as the present position of the Lord Chancellor with reference to these appointments. He had to rely, more or less, upon information which he could not test; he had to rely to a great extent upon the suggestions and information afforded him by the Party to which he belonged. He did not think that was the way in which they should go about the selection to these important judicial posts. They had, therefore, to consider what, with reference to the great democratic movement which had taken place in their local government, was the best course to be adopted. During the last five years it had been his privilege to be a Member of the Committee of the County Council of Glamorganshire. That Committee was entrusted with the framing of a scheme of education, under the Intermediate Education Act, for the whole county. Under that Act the County Council Committee was composed of three nominated members appointed by the County Council and two appointed by the Government. The Government of the day was Conservative at the time of the formation of this Committee, and they put on two Conservative Members. The Committee sat five years, doing most important work, and his experience had been that a Committee of that sort, acting under a grave sense of responsibility, whatever its political opinions might be, came to the discharge of those duties under that sense of responsibility, and would discharge them without reference to political leanings. A Committee of the County Council would, he believed, do admirable service in obtaining information, and ultimately in nominating those who should be put upon the Bench. He was convinced, after careful consideration, that this expedient would be of the greatest possible service to the Lord Chancellor. A change in the present system could not be long delayed, and he commended the present proposal as worthy of the consideration of the House. The only way in which they could avoid the exercise of political and social influence in the appointment of Magistrates was to devolve the duty of nomination, as well as of selection, upon the responsible representatives of the people. Then they would have the primary element of a proper unpaid magistracy—a representation of all classes without reference to position and without reference to property qualification. He could not conclude without bearing his personal testimony to the manner in which, under most serious difficulties, the Lord Chan-Chancellor had endeavoured, at all events in the County of Glamorgan, to make a selection which represented all classes; and there could not be a more conspicuous instance of success upon the Petty Sessional Bench than the appointments made from among the working men of that county. In supporting this Bill he was adopting a self-denying course, because the effect of the first section would be that he would cease to be a Magistrate. But he frankly admitted that he did not feel he was fitted to be a Magistrate, and he would gladly be relieved of what was to him an unpleasant duty.

Mr. J. GRANT LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) rose to move that the Bill be read a second time on this day six months. If a Bill of this character was required, it ought, he thought, to be brought in by someone of very considerable legal qualifications, and he did not think the gentlemen whose names were on the back of the Bill possessed those qualifications. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading stated that the Bench at present was in an unsatisfactory condition, but he did not give one instance where the administration of justice by the local Bench was opposed by the people of the district. Hon. gentlemen seemed to consider that the Lord Chancellor acted only on the advice of wirepullers. But the Lord Chancellor was not bound to accept the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant. There was no reason why every parish meeting in England should not send a list of names to the Lord Chancellor. Both the mover and the seconder poured unlimited praise on the present state of things; and yet they sought to abolish the whole system. He agreed with the mover that magistrates were discharging their duties faithfully, and that politics ought not to enter into the question of their appointment. But the hon. Member's manner of carrying out his desire was most singular. The Lord Chancellor was a political officer; but he was an officer of immense dignity, and the officer least likely to be influenced by political considerations in discharging most important functions. The Bill divided itself into three parts; and the principle of the Bill was so much involved in each that it would be impossible to make it acceptable by amendment. The first part of the Bill disqualified any Magistrate who, without due and sufficient cause, did not attend once a year to his duties. He was not indisposed to agree with that condition. Such an arrangement would give a man an opportunity of retiring gracefully from a position which possibly he did not seek. But the whole Bill proposed to restrict the power of the Lord Chancellor. He believed that the deputation to the Lord Chancellor last year desired to set his hands free in the exercise of his authority, but this Bill tied his hands. The second part of the Bill prevented the Lord Chancellor from appointing anybody except those who had been nominated by a Committee of the County Council. The Lord Chancellor, however, had the power of vetoing the nomination. That was not trusting the people. Of all the methods of nominating magistrates the proposal of this Bill surely was the worst. There were political parties in every County Council, and they had seen cases where a party with a majority of only one or two had made nominations to public offices entirely from its own side. One or two illustrations had been afforded very recently. He fancied that, when that Committee was nominated by some of the County Councils, they would nominate persons only of their own views, and they alone had the slightest chance of being made magistrates. The third portion of the Bill dealt with the qualification of magistrates. He was not altogether anxious to fight against that particular part of the Bill. He was no great believer in property qualifications; but, on the other hand, he was not altogether opposed to the property qualification. To have a competency was, at any rate, likely to indicate a person who would be impartial, and who would be incorruptible. He did not deny that men without any such competency were perfectly honest and straightforward, just and fair-minded; but he did not believe anyone would contend that, if a man possessed nothing, he was the more likely to make an impartial Judge than if he had property of his own. He should prefer to hear some sounder reasons for interfering with the present condition of affairs than had been adduced; and certainly he should like to hear the views of the Government. It was a question of the greatest importance, because politics should be left out of account in the appointment of Magistrates.

MR. J. A. RENTOUL (Down, E.) formally seconded the Motion.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The first statement I have to make with reference to this Bill is that I have received to-day from the Lord Chancellor, who is probably a better judge than I am of this subject, an intimation that he is favourable to it. What is the position which the hon. Member has taken up with reference to this matter? This Bill contains three propositions. One is that magistrates who do not attend to their magisterial duties should be removed from the Roll. The hon. Member does not object to that proposal; and there are other assemblies besides magistrates who do not attend very often unless it is on a question in which they are interested. I refer to an Assembly not very far removed from our own. In many counties there is never a great attendance of magistrates except when there is some place to give away. Then I have observed that all the magistrates who do not attend on other occasions, say, when there is a Chief Constable to be appointed, put in an appearance. That is a scandal which ought to be removed, and the men who hold these high judicial appointments ought not to become in public opinion mere walking gentlemen on the stage. I go to another point; and that is the qualification. I do not understand that the hon. Member objects to the removal of the qualification. He says men who possess nothing are not persons who would be very fitted to be magistrates. What does he mean by "nothing"? Does he mean that the necessary qualification is to be a qualification of real property, and that everyone who has no real property of a certain amount is a person who has "nothing"? I cannot understand why a man who has £100 earned by weekly wages should not be capable of becoming a magistrate. Why is it to be property of a particular description? I do not want to have a man in receipt of relief a magistrate, but the class of magistrate in a county should be a magistrate who represented all classes of the community. That is the important point. There is nothing more injurious to the administration of justice than—I can speak from long experience—a prevalent belief that the administration of justice in the counties is confined exclusively to one class of the community. That belief has a most injurious effect on the public mind, and though I know and believe that the magistrates do their duty in all respects, it is a prejudice against them that they only represent one particular class of the community. I remember in old days, when Sir James Graham was at the Home Office, he stated in this House that it was found necessary, in consequence of public opinion in the country on the subject, to provide that all convictions under the Game Laws should receive a special review of the Home Office. Why? Because he knew from public opinion that no convictions under the Game Laws were enforced in consequence of the magistrates being confined to one particular class of the community. That is a great objection, and when you have a responsible Lord Chancellor, he ought to have the liberty to appoint persons of all classes of the community whom he thinks fitted for the Magistracy, apart altogether from a special qualification in any particular class of property. On that ground, therefore, I do not see that any objection whatever can be taken to those two parts of the Bill. Then it is said that the recommendations coming from the Lord Chancellor should go through the local authority. That is a very important part of the Bill. There have been proposals made for elective magistrates. I have always been against them. It would be a very evil principle to introduce in this country; but I have said that in my opinion an election of the character proposed in this Bill would be a very proper election. Let us consider what is the position of the Lord Chancellor at present. It is quite true that he is not bound to receive or to act on the nomination of the Lord Lieutenant. That is absolutely necessary. The history of the nominations of the Lord Lieutenants in many counties is such as to have unquestionably, in present and past generations, excluded to a great degree from the Magistracy, persons who belonged to all classes and all creeds. It is useless to deny the fact that in a great many cases the appointments have been made of those belonging to one creed, to one class, and to one political opinion. That may be denied, but the denial would be contrary to the experience of anyone who knows the country life of this country. It is quite true that the Lord Chancellor is not bound by those recommendations; he may go outside them. But to whom is he to go? The Lord Chancellor has not the local knowledge, and therefore he is obliged to rely on recommendations that are made to him, not always very trustworthy. I suppose hon. Members know the kind of pressure under which Members of Parliament are placed in order to recommend persons who are political supporters in the counties, of whom they themselves know very little. That is the source of information which the hon. Gentleman describes as wire-pulling; but the present system is more exposed to wire-pulling than any system you can conceive. I hope we shall get rid of that, just as we have got rid of recommendations by hon. Members for places —a source of great evil to the men who had to make them. I should like to see the recommendations to the Magistracy put beyond the reach of hon. Members on both sides of the House. What does this Bill recommend? It recommends that the responsible Local Authority should vouch to the Lord Chancellor for the men whom they think are fitted for such a position. What can be more reasonable or sound than such a principle as that? They are the men who know the persons. *Prima facie*, they exercise that responsibility, not privately or secretly, but in the face of day; and the Chairman of the County Council and the Committee are responsible, in the presence of their constituencies and of the locality generally in which they live, for the recommendations they make. It is quite true that in many County Councils there is a political predominance—a political predominance of which Gentlemen opposite have no reason to complain. But I have faith in local government of this character, and I do not believe that County Councils will abuse that power. They will use it in the presence of people who know what they are doing, and they will vouch to the Lord Chancellor men who from their position and their character are likely to be good and worthy magistrates. Surely that is a much better system than any that at present exists. It is better than the sole recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant, of which nobody knows anything. It is far better than the private representations to which the Lord Chancellor must now necessarily have recourse in the nomination of magistrates. You will have responsible local authorities sending in lists of gentlemen to the Lord Chancellor. The Lord Chancellor is not bound to appoint everybody who is there nominated, and I myself am not disposed to support the proposal that the Lord Chancellor should be limited to those nominations; the discretion of the Lord Chancellor ought to be unlimited. It is very desirable the Lord Chancellor should not be responsible only to the local bodies, but that he should preserve his present responsibility, which is a responsibility to the Executive of Parliament. Therefore I recommend my hon. Friends who are promoting this Bill to alter the measure in that respect. But if you are to have a commending authority, how can you have a better one than the responsible local body, whether in a county or a borough? What objection is there to such a proposal? The hon. and learned Member said that if the county Members had had sufficient notice they would have come down to oppose the Bill. On what ground are they going to oppose it? Because they think magistrates who do not attend are people who ought to be supported in their present position? Because they will have nobody on the Bench who has not got a real property qualification?

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): It is not so now.

SIR W. HARCOURT: What is not so?

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER: It is not now confined to a real property qualification.

SIR W. HARCOURT: What do you call a real property qualification? Can a man who gets two guineas a week as wages become a county magistrate? I know men who were as fit as any man to be on the Bench, and the only reason why they were not appointed was that they had not the qualification now required. Is it intended by this qualification to keep such men off the Bench? I think the present disqualification ought to be removed. I cannot understand what it is county gentlemen oppose. Is it the fitness of the County Council to recommend men for appointment? I should have thought, after the experience they have had, that they would have had confidence in their County Councils. I certainly can answer for the boroughs. They have confidence in their Councils. Those Councils know their fellow-citizens, and they are far better able than anybody else, than any Lord Lieutenant, than any Member of Parliament, than any private individual, to tender to the Lord Chancellor counsels he ought to have in selecting men as magistrates. I therefore entirely resent what the hon. and learned Member said—namely, that we are weakening the position of the responsible magistrates to administer justice in this country. On the contrary, in my opinion, we are taking the proper measures to see that the fittest men are appointed magistrates. We are not doing anything to introduce a political element into the question; we are making the best possible provision against it. We leave the responsibility where it now is—viz., upon the Lord Chancellor, who is the highest executive judicial officer in the country; and as to the advice and the information he is to have on the subject, we recommend that that should rest with men who have the best means of knowing and of exercising that responsibility in the face of day and of the community in which the magistrates are to administer justice. The Lord Chancellor, so far from feeling that the proposal is any impeachment of his authority, so far from feeling that it makes his task more difficult, feels it would be in principle one that will assist him very much in the performance of his duties. Under such circumstances I, on the part of the Government, give a hearty support to Bill.

*MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said, the right hon. Gentleman, as the Leader of a great Party, would not consent to the inclusion in the Bill of Clause 13. If that was gone, what was left of the operative part of the Bill? What was there now in the present law to prevent a Town Council or a County Council from making nominations? Those who had experience in these matters knew perfectly well that unofficially, and, indeed, sometimes openly and with all the appearance of official action, such nominations were made. His purpose was to show that the evils produced by such nominations were quite as great as the evils produced by private recommendations usually sought in these cases. He knew of a case in which, on the Lord Chancellor seeking to make appointments in a borough, it was decided locally to place the thing on what was called a non-political footing, and, accordingly a joint list was was agreed upon; the Liberals nominated their men, and the Conservatives theirs. One of the Parties—the Liberals—did not select their best men, and would not contend they selected their best men, and the result was that better men were put on the Bench than the Liberal Party had themselves recommended. If the recommendations were made by representative bodies chosen, as they must be chosen in the present day, upon political grounds, it stood to reason that the nominations must be made, and would be made, as a reward of zealous political services. Suppose that a County Council had a certain political party in a clear majority, did anyone suppose that when there was a chance of making nominations to the Lord Chancellor, and active political men put forward their claims, the majority of the Council would dare to disregard those claims? Speaking to a deputation in November, 1893, the present Lord Chancellor said that names had been put before him by Members of Parliament of those who were grossly unfitted to be put on the Judicial Bench. The nominations were avowedly made on political grounds, and made by responsible persons, such as Members of Parliament. Was it contended that a Member of Parliament was less responsible than a County Council?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I venture to say he knows less about the matter than a County Council.

*MR. STUART-WORTLEY undertook to say that was not so. A County Council was subject to, and was swayed by, motives which were often more likely to mislead it than the motives which, according to the Lord Chancellor, misled Members of Parliament in making the recommendations. Of course the Lord Chancellor was in favour of the Bill. Why? Because the action of his Party had placed him in a very ridiculous and humiliating position, and burdened him with duties which no Lord Chancellor could be expected to discharge. It had been said there was positive evidence that these political recommendations had resulted in disaster. They had the actual placing on the Bench of men who were not fitted to be there.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I made no such statement.

*MR. STUART-WORTLEY (referring to his notes) said, he was obliged to say the Lord Chancellor only stated that such men were recommended. No case could be shown of a Lord Lieutenant having recommended a man who had been convicted of an indictable offence, as was admitted to have happened in the case of one of these political recommendations to the Lord Chancellor. The Bill was not honest enough to propose direct popular election to the Magistracy, but it was none the less bad, because it would bring about popular election in substance if not in form. There was nothing in the Bill, for instance, to prevent a political majority, politically elected on a local public body, from nominating themselves to the Bench as Magistrates. It was said that at present Lords Lieutenant made appointments to the Bench solely on political grounds. That he denied. What would be said by hon. Gentlemen opposite if he were to contend that the Lords Lieutenant appointed men of one political party because men could not be found in the other political party who were fit to sit on the Bench? And yet one statement was not less ridiculous than the other. Personally, he had no desire to fight hard for the retention of the property qualification; but there was something to be said in its favour. There were other things besides popular election, which conferred representative character, and one of these was the possession of property, which gave not only a representative character, but an interest in local affairs. However, if it were not going to be laid down by the Bill that the Lord Chancellor was not to be allowed to go outside the nominations of the local authority, it did not become necessary to fight so hard for the property qualification. To sum up, his objections to the Bill were that it would stereotpye and perpetuate the system of nomination on political grounds; that while it would give the preponderance of nominations to one political party, it made no provision to bring that preponderance to an end after the lapse of time; and that it made no provision either for the representation of political minorities on the Bench, which the promotion of the Bill professed to be the object they had at heart.

MR. CYRIL DODD (Essex, Maldon) was glad to hear the statement from the other side that politics should have nothing to do with appointments to the County Benches. That was what the Liberal Party had been striving for for many years; but unfortunately politics had had a great deal to do with the appointments to the County Benches, with the result that when the present Government came into power only from 8 to 10 per cent. of the Magistrates in England and Wales belonged to the Liberal Party. The hon. Member for the Hallam Division of Sheffield said he was anxious that the minority, whatever it might be, should have representation on the County Benches. The Liberal Party were also anxious that that should be the case. But what had been the state of things in the past? It had not been a question of minority of the majority, but simply a question of the politics of the Lord Lieutenant.

He was sorry to say, that as a general rule, it was hopeless for anyone to expect a nomination to the county bench unless he was of the same political Party as the Lord Lieutenant. He was, therefore, glad to hear in the House a general consensus of opinion that the fitness of a person, and not his politics, ought to influence the Lord Lieutenant in nominating him a magistrate; and he was also pleased to find that the property qualification had apparently no defender in any quarter of the House. He pointed out that there was a very considerable difference between the modes in which magistrates were appointed in the boroughs and in the counties. In boroughs there was no property qualification, and the appointments were made by the Lord Chancellor, who sometimes, but not generally, paid attention to the wishes of the Town Councils. In the counties the nominations were made by the Lords Lieutenant, and there was a property qualification of either an income of £100 a year from freehold or long leasehold land, or the occupancy for two years of a house which was assessed for the Inhabited House Duty of £100 a year. Therefore, while in the boroughs justice could be administered by men of all classes, in the counties no one could administer it but persons of considerable social position. The promoters of the Bill contended it was a good thing to have justice administered in counties and boroughs by men of all classes, if proper men in all classes could be found to do it. The Bill had, therefore, four main propositions—first, the abolition of nominations by the Lord Lieutenant; second, empowering local authorities to nominate; third, the removal of the property qualification; and, fourth, the removal from the Bench of gentlemen who did not take the trouble to attend. With regard to the third proposition, he did not think there was any one in the House who would venture to say that a property qualification was the sole qualification necessary in a man to administer justice. What really was required in a magistrate was a sense of justice and a determination to do right, and if that could be combined with some knowledge of the law, a perfect magistrate would be obtained. He thought the Bill on the whole an excellent measure, and he was prepared to give it his heartiest support.

Sir H. FLETCHER (Sussex, Lewes) said, that as one who had been a county magistrate for 35 years, and a member of the County Council since its formation, he must take exception to some of the remarks of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The County Council would not, in his opinion, be a proper body to entrust with the nomination or the recommendation to the Lord Chancellor of gentlemen who should be justices of the peace. He would point out that there was in existence a body which in his own county sent to the Lord Lieutenant, or to the Lord Chancellor, the names of persons qualified to act as magistrates. In Sussex it had been the practice during many years for the chairman of the petty sessional division to send in the names of gentlemen whom he knew—and there were none in a better position to know—to possess the proper qualifications for a justice of the peace. Some months ago he, as chairman of his own petty sessional division, sent in the names of three gentleman to the Lord Chancellor—two of them Conservatives and one a Liberal. The Lord Chancellor placed upon the commission of the peace one gentleman holding Conservative principles, and one holding Liberal principles, whose name he himself personally sent in, struck out the name of his other Conservative friend, and placed on a gentleman belonging to the Liberal Party.

Sir W. HARCOURT: That is co-optation.

Sir H. FLETCHER retorted that it might be co-optation, but he was perfectly satisfied with the arrangement that had been made. He objected to the County Council being the nominating body, because, in his opinion, they had quite enough to do at the present time; while, with regard to the idea of placing working men on the commission of the peace, from his long experience of country life as a magistrate, he was satisfied there were very few *bonâ fide* working men who would be able to find the time for the duties. He knew many men who had to come up to attend Committees on some 33 days during the year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might think he spoke as an old Tory, but he was not that in the least. He was ready to go with the times so long as the times advanced steadily and did not make any too radical change. But the present Bill was a most extreme measure. The property qualification ought to be supported. What would happen if there were on a County Council a large preponderance of the temperance party, and they recommended the placing on the commission only those who supported temperance views? The Bill was bad in its main principle, and he should consider it his duty to give it every opposition in his power.

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD, York) said, that if the friends of this Bill had been anxious to obtain some arguments in its favour, they could not have found anything that would more heartily satisfy them than the very frank speech of the hon. and gallant Member. He had let the House into the secrets of the petty sessional division over which, no doubt, he very admirably presided in the county of Sussex. He had the honesty to tell the House the condition of things in this particular division. Now, it might be impertinent to inquire into details, but he might assume there were, at any rate, a fair proportion of Tories upon that Bench, and that every now and again, just for the sake of appearances, they let in a Liberal. But how did they get him in? Why, it was a little club. These gentlemen considered when they met at Petty Sessions—

> "Now who would be a pleasant fellow to have amongst as a Justice of the Peace? Shall it be A or shall it be B? B is a Liberal, but still he is a good fellow; let's have him,"

and so the little matter was arranged. And this was how justice was administered in the petty sessional division of Sussex over which the hon. and gallant Gentleman presided! Surely he must admit that, except under very special circumstances that must be connected with the hon. and gallant Gentleman's presidency, such a system would be very likely to prove a failure.

SIR H. FLETCHER (interposing) reminded the learned Solicitor General that the system, as he had said, obtained in the whole county, and not merely in his own district. And as to only now and then letting in a Liberal, they had great difficulty in finding any Liberals at all.

*SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD said, that was because they could not find them with the property qualification. They either did not live, these unfortunate people, in sufficiently highly-rated houses, or they had not got £100 a year from lands and buildings, or they were not good fellows. It turned out, too, that this was a bigger club than he had thought, because it was not only attached to one petty sessional division, but was a big county club. The hon. and gallant Gentleman said this was a terrible Radical measure. It would probably surprise the hon. and gallant Member to know that in 1835 a provision that the appointment of borough Magistrates should rest with the Town Council—not with the Lord Chancellor—was included in a Bill brought before Parliament in that year, and no doubt hon. Gentlemen opposite would at once appreciate why it did not become law. It was rejected by the House of Lords. Lord John Russell, in dealing with the Lords' Amendments on September 7th, 1835, made a speech in which he pointed out that the House of Commons, in the last Debate on the subject, approved, by a large majority, that the power of nomination should be in the hands of Town Councils, but this proposal did not become law because the House of Lords rejected it. Yet the hon. Member was surprised that such a proposal should be made. He respected the hon. and gallant Gentleman for having the courage of his convictions, but what real grounds could he advance for retaining a property qualification? There was no property qualification in Scotland for the election of Justices either in borough or county. There was no property qualification required for the post of Her Majesty's Judges. Then why should it be persevered in in the present instance in this part only of the United Kingdom, when, as he was confident the hon. and gallant Gentleman must admit, it operated in many cases very disadvantageously for the public good in preventing men who were otherwise fitted for the position from taking their place on the magisterial bench?

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER said, he thought the hon. and learned Member had scarcely convinced the House that there was any demand for the Bill. He admitted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had no great difficulty in showing that the present state of the law with respect to the appointment of magistrates was eminently unsatisfactory, and certainly nobody would be concerned to defend, in every detail, the existing system. The right hon. Gentleman had given instances of the abuses which had come to his knowledge in connection with partisan appointments, but it certainly should be recognised that those abuses, relevant as they might be to a remote period, could hardly be validly urged in relation to the present time, so far, at any rate, as Lords Lieutenant were concerned. Now, as to the property qualification, he was free to confess that he did not see that any very great advantage was to be secured by retaining it as it at present existed, yet he believed that in many instances a property qualification might fairly, and with advantage, be enforced in spirit in the appointment of Justices, a qualification which, under 38 and 39 Vic., cap. 54, was no longer confined, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had inadvertently stated, to that of real estate. He said just now that the present state of things was eminently unsatisfactory, and they had recently had proof of the fact. They had witnessed the spectacle of the Lord Chancellor being practically mobbed in his own official room in connection with this matter, and of a deputation who pressed upon him receiving a well-deserved snubbing at his hands. He was not surprised at the Lord Chancellor being reluctant to receive advice tendered to him in such a fashion, though, unfortunately, he virtually accepted and acted upon it in too many instances. What was the result of the reluctant compliance of the Lord Chancellor with the suggestions which were conveyed to him in this disrespectful and dictatorial manner? Cases had been mentioned more than once in the House in which men appointed through this dictation made their first appearance in Court, not on the bench but in the dock. Another and more remarkable case still had been quoted, in which a person, who first made his appearance in Court in that particular part to which he had referred, was a man whose nomination had been declined by the Lord Lieutenant of the county, and who had been appointed over the head of the Lord Lieutenant at the dictation of the hon. Member for Peterborough and his friends. Those facts, he thought, went far to prove the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the present system was eminently unsatisfactory. Then, as to the system proposed by the Bill, that a popularly elected local body should be the authority for recommending persons for nomination to the Bench, they had recently had some evidence in London how a popularly elected body set about to discharge its judicial duties. He would not go into details of any particular case, but it had been indubitably proved before the High Court that, at any rate, one leading member of the local body to which he had alluded, entered into a back parlour conspiracy and into collusion with one of the parties to a suit which it had to judicially determine. If recent experience had taught them one fact more plainly than another, it was that popularly elected local bodies —elected as they were amidst all the controversies of partisan disputes inseparably connected with such elections— were *ipso facto* disqualified for such a duty as the Bill sought to impose upon them. He remembered that in 1867 the then Lord Chancellor—Lord Chelmsford —laid down a rule for his own guidance in those matters, to the effect that, in consequence of a Vote of that House, he would not appoint any borough magistrates unless he had, beforehand, the approval of the Town Council. Now, he thought at that time that that was a monstrous decision for the Lord Chancellor to arrive at, and he did not conceal his opinion. The result was that several thoroughly qualified gentlemen upon a list equally representative of both Parties, whose names he had presented to the Lord Chancellor for nomination to a borough bench withdrew their consent to serve. He could conceive nothing less calculated to conduce to the dignity of the magisterial bench than that its members should have to pass through the ordeal of an indirect popular election, and have their claims and qualifications openly canvassed, in no reserved terms, before a popularly elected local body. That, in his opinion, was the most objectionable part of the Bill. They had been told that under this Bill all classes would be represented on the Bench. What actual foundation was there for such an allegation? Did the Chancellor of the Exchequer undertake to assure them that the popularly elected local bodies should so set to work as to accept for nomination persons of all classes? What had been the general experience as to the election of Aldermen of Municipal Corporations all over the Kingdom? There had been one point which almost all those elections had in common, namely, that, while Party influences were usually supreme, the nominations had been almost entirely confined to one class. Instances where Municipal Corporations had chosen any persons outside their own social surroundings were few and rare, and those who were elected were almost invariably members of the middle class, to the exclusion of what was generally known as the landed class, while he did not remember any instance in which working-class members had been placed on the Corporations. If, therefore, popular election by local bodies was likely to have this effect, it would certainly be a new departure. With regard to the provision for the removal of non-attending justices, he thought that would operate very harshly, and would in many cases be inimical to the public interest. It would in the first place, he thought, lead to the removal of active useful men who had other occupations. It would introduce a system very like the practice of scoring divisions in the House, and judging therefrom of the legislative activity of members, for Justices of the Peace would put in an appearance, perhaps for one day, just to qualify under this Bill. Justices had other duties to discharge besides going to Quarter and Petty Sessions, and some of the most essential of such duties were those in connection with the granting of summonses and formal proceedings of that kind. To sum the Bill up, it seemed to him there was no requirement for it at all. The Lord Chancellor now was perfectly entitled to consult any person he thought fit with regard to the appointments to the County or Borough Bench. He would not, at this moment, say anything as to the unwise departure from the old constitutional usage under which the Lord Lieutenant of the County was held responsible for nominations, but even as the law had been interpreted in recent years, there was nothing to prevent the Lord Chancellor, if he thought fit, from applying to the Chairman of the County Council, or of the Standing Joint Committee, or anyone well versed in county affairs. He understood that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was opposed to Clause 13 of the Bill; but under this Bill, even with the omission of that clause, the Lord Chancellor would find himself placed in the unpleasant position of having either to accept *en bloc* a list of persons submitted by the local authority, or incur the odium of discriminating between a selection. The position now of the unpaid magistrates was an unsatisfactory one. He believed that there was a great risk of the public confidence being withdrawn when magistrates were appointed on avowedly political grounds, or as the result of lobbying and intrigue, and all the devices associated with a popular election. He confessed he should regard the extension of the system of the appointment of stipendiary magistrates for judicial work as a step in the right direction. The idea that the Bench ought to be composed of a certain number of members of one class and a certain number of another was a farce. What we required were honourable and conscientious men to discharge their duties without fear, favour, or affection. He thought this was a most unnecessary and mischievous Bill, and hoped the House would not consent to it.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, he could give the right hon. Member a very ready explanation of the fact that municipal bodies had drawn their aldermen from the same class as themselves. It was because they had almost universally elected aldermen from amongst themselves. Thus only those were selected who had undergone the ordeal of election, and the supplementation of their number was left to a further ordeal of election. Thus there was nothing in the right hon. Gentleman's argument from the action of the Corporations. There seemed to be a very general impression that the existing system of appointing magistrates was open, not only to criticism, but almost to condemnation. The appointments were not, in the boroughs, almost absolutely political; they were made by a high political official, who was a Party politician, and the qualification was generally Party services. It had been suggested that the nominations should be made from a joint list, but this also seemed to be open to objection. The result of the present system was very often that there was no qualification whatever that could be alleged in favour of an applicant, except that he had rendered some Party service. In the counties it was better, but there, too, the appointments were undoubtedly apt to be too much based on social considerations, and the result was the restriction too much of the magistracy to the landed classes and chiefly to that one class; and there was the graver objection, also, that many who had done really good public service had been overlooked in consequence of their not being personally known to the Lord Lieutenant. The Bill would obviate this and give the honour to the best men and those most entitled to it. The Bill, he thought, would be of great service in subjecting the appointments to the influence of public opinion, and in substituting the qualification of public work for private self-seeking. There were many things that would justify the nomination of magistrates by the Local Authorities. Borough Councils were now consulted about nominations, and could place objections before the Lord Chancellor. Some members of Local Authorities were *ex officio* magistrates, like the Mayors, who were the chief magistrates in boroughs, and also sat *ex officio* on some county benches; the Chairmen of District Councils, and ex-Mayors after their year of office. He was aware that Local Authorities recommended persons as magistrates now, but it was a privilege and not a right to do so, and probable strictly *ultra vires*, and it was chiefly done after the Lord Chancellor had consulted the Council, and then only rarely. He believed that the nomination of magistrates by local governing bodies amenable to public opinion would have its advantages. The pecuniary qualifications that had hitherto been required for magistrates were against the whole tendency of the times. No qualification was required for a Mayor or Chairman of a District Council. They did not want qualifications, but qualification—familiarity with public work and service, an intuitive instinct in the administration of justice, and some legal knowledge. The Bill would add the qualification of public service to the pecuniary one which at present existed, and by securing the representation of a larger number of classes upon the magisterial bench would give greater confidence in the administration of justice and create a deeper sympathy with the administration of the law. He objected to Section 11, and thought the Bill should only give an additional public channel of nomination in place of the present private and secret one, which was irresponsible and not open to criticism. But, subject to this, he would not interfere with the existing system, but would, by erasing the 11th clause, give the double opportunity of nomination.

Mr. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe) said, that in the constituency which he represented, containing 9,600 working men, there was not a single resident magistrate, and many of these working men would make as capable magistrates as many of the Members of that House or the other. They returned two Moderates at the recent County Council election, and he would have no hesitation in intrusting to a constituency like that the recommendation of magistrates.

*Mr. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) said, that, before attendance in that House occupied so much of his time, he regularly attended two county benches, and was struck with the efficiency and the self-sacrifice which the magistrates showed in the discharge of their duties. He had never heard any complaints against them nor of their being influenced by petty motives in the administration of justice; and, speaking for himself, he had great admiration for the way the magistrates discharged their duties. It had been said there should be more magistrates. A great many more magistrates had been appointed. A return was moved for last week of those who had been appointed magistrates by being elected chairmen of District Councils. That return was granted, and until it had been prepared he thought they were premature in pressing that Bill. An hon. Member had said that nearly all the magistrates were landowners, and that if a man was not a landowner he stood little chance of being appointed. From a return of the county magistrates elected last year, taking the county of Chester, he found among the magistrates there was a retired merchant, a farmer, a surgeon, a woollen manufacturer, a tanner, a felt-hat maker, an iron merchant, and an ironmonger. This showed that all classes in the county were drawn upon. In the county of Durham, he found among the county magistrates a doctor of medicine, a public accountant, a brickmaker, a butcher, an engine builder, a glass manufacturer, and a timber merchant. In Herefordshire there was an auctioneer, a retired draper, a farmer, a manure merchant, a Member of Parliament, a retired grocer, a newspaper proprietor, a retired officer of the Army, and, lastly, a landed proprietor. If he had had more time, he could have proved that in all the counties in England the magisterial bench was well filled, and there was no necessity for the proposed great alteration in the law. It would hardly be denied that the present law had worked well. In former days some Lord Lieutenants might have appointed magistrates in a haphazard way, and from social and political reasons. But that was not so nowadays. In many counties it was said—

> "Why should there be such a preponderance of Conservatives on the magisterial Bench?"

With equal truth it might be asked why should there be a preponderance of Conservatives and Unionists on the County Councils. Why did a county return Conservative Members of Parliament except that they represented the general feeling of the electors? There were counties in England in which the Bench of Magistrates, the Members of the County Council, and the Members of Parliament were of the same politics. That was because the great majority of the people were of one way of thinking, and it could not be said that the elected Representatives were unworthy to sit in this House or on the County Council. There might be parts of Wales in which most men were of Liberal politics, and there you would find many magistrates were Liberals, as were also County Councillors and Members of Parliament. But who would, therefore, lay down a hard-and-fast rule, as the Lord Chancellor had done, that a man should not be appointed a magistrate unless he were a Liberal. ["No, no!"] Well, when a Conservative was proposed for the County Bench, the Lord Chancellor said he could not appoint him unless he could appoint a Liberal at the same time; he would appoint a pair, but not one without the other. This was giving a political complexion to the appointments in a manner inconsistent with justice. What the County Councils would do in this matter was shown by what they had done in electing Aldermen. During the last three years the Aldermen in the London County Council had been of one way of thinking. If they were to take to appointing magistrates according to the political majority there would be an end to all idea of justice. After what they had done in appointing Aldermen he should be afraid to give the proposed power to County Councils. They did their proper work well, and there was no reason why this fresh task should be put upon them. We must leave the selection of county magistrates subject to an arrangement which had worked well. If a Lord Lieutenant felt called upon to make fresh nominations he looked about for the right man in the locality in which the magistrates were needed, and he chose men who possessed the confidence of their neighbours, without asking whether they were Conservatives or Liberals. In his own county, whenever a Liberal was found who was worthy of confidence, he was sure to be made a magistrate. He hoped the present mode of appointing magistrates would be continued, and he regarded the introduction of this Bill as an unnecessary waste of time.

Mr. JOSEPH RICHARDSON (Durham, S.E.) said, that he was connected with two counties, the North Riding of York and Durham, and he had no fault to find with the method of appointing magistrates. It was true there was on the Bench a majority of Conservatives; but he had yet to learn that they had failed in their duty, and when they were on the Bench they acted with impartiality. There were appointed a number of gentlemen who were, at the time, of his own principles; but they soon turned out to be either Conservatives or Liberal Unionists. But they were none the worse magistrates for that. He would be sorry that the practice which had hitherto prevailed should be interfered with.

Mr. T. L. WHARTON (York. W.R., Ripon) complained that the Bill had not been obtainable until that day, although if it was passed its operation might be fraught with very serious consequences indeed. There seemed to be an idea that Lords Lieutenant were *ipso facto* Tories, but in the North Riding of Yorkshire the Lord Lieutenant was the Liberal Marquess of Ripon, and, if this Bill was passed, the manufacture of magistrates would pass into the hands of a County Committee, which would probably be presided over by the right hon. Member for Thanet (Mr. James Lowther). Thus the framers of this Bill jump from the frying pan into the fire. Magistrates ought to be educated men whom the nation could trust. The Lords Lieutenant had done their duty in appointing the best men they could, and magistrates had not regarded politics as interfering in any way with their duty. What might be called the disestablishment portion of this Bill got rid of magistrates who did not attend to their duties; but such magistrates did not appear to be in the way of anybody else, and they had disestablished themselves. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said some magistrates never attended unless there was something to be given away; but magistrates now had nothing to give away; they had no places of profit left in their hands, appointments having been transferred to the County Committee. As to the qualification of magistrates, he had always felt that that was too narrow, and that, although a man might not possess £100 a year from land, or live in a house of the value of £100 a year, he might yet be qualified to act as a Justice. Medical men, officers of the Army and Navy, and holders of University degrees, might be appointed irrespective of their property or income. As to nomination by County Councils, he had seen a good deal of these bodies, and admitted that they did their work well, but he believed that this duty was the last of all that should be put upon them.

Mr. J. H. JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham) said that, as a Sussex magistrate he took a strong view, which was, that the Bill was unnecessary and in operation would be mischievous. The property qualification might perhaps be widened, but there was one consideration to be kept in view, and it was that a magistrate should be a man of substance rather than a man of straw; otherwise, if he made a mistake or were guilty of misconduct in his office, the aggrieved person would have no remedy. He must emphasise the protest against nomination by County Councils, who were administrative bodies and whose usefulness would be interfered with if they were called upon to take part in selecting men for distinction on party or personal grounds. What more unhappy position of things could there be than that a County Council should be made a battle-ground of party or the arbiter of social distinctions, instead of attending to its administrative functions.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I shall not detain the House more than a very few minutes, but I desire, before the Debate terminates, to express my own view on the very far-reaching subject which, under the auspices of the Government, we are asked to take up. The House is now attempting to deal with a very old institution, an institution not without anomalies—for all old institutions have anomalies—but with an institution which is, after all, very closely bound up with the whole social life of England, so far as we can trace it back in the past; and I do not think we ought to make any fundamental alteration in that institution without looking very carefully in the direction in which it is proposed to move. I have no personal prejudice in favour of administering local justice by unpaid magistrates. In Scotland the great bulk of the judicial work is not performed by the magistrates, but it is done by paid lawyers of great eminence, the sheriffs and deputy-sheriffs of the counties. If you wish to alter the English fundamentally—and I think you are going to do so by this Bill—you will have to do it in the direction of paid magistrates. There are grave objections to such a course. In the first place, it is very expensive; it is very novel in England in the second place, and you will find it very difficult to give to stipendiary magistrates in England the same authority which the sheriffs in Scotland have through traditional prescription so long enjoyed. But what is it you propose? You propose to do by this Bill that which we in England have always prided ourselves in not doing—namely, to make the appointment of those who have to administer justice depend on the fortune of popular election. Disguise the matter as you may, if you pass the Bill in its present form, you will, to all intents and purposes, give Parliamentary directions to the Lord Chancellor of the day to take the magistrates suggested to him by the County Council. We cannot hope to keep politics out of the election of County Councils. As regards boroughs, we all know that the elections take place on Party lines; and, though I am thankful to say that in the counties that is not so much the position of things as yet, it has arisen in some counties, and it may become as prevalent in counties as it is now in the boroughs. If such a state of things occurred, could you contemplate with satisfaction having so altered the ancient mode of electing magistrates as to hand them over to the changes and chances of stray Party majorities? The accusation has been made against Lord Lieutenants that they recommended persons for the magistracy because they shared their political views. I am not prepared to deny that some such gross derelictions of duty may have been committed here and there. It has been done by Lord Lieutenants of both colours, and it ought never to have been done. But observe that the action of Lord Lieutenants now comes under the searching light of public opinion. Such Lord Lieutenants as I have consulted, have constantly told me that they have made every effort to find persons differing from themselves in politics who, to the best of their judgment, will be well qualified to carry out the duties of magistrates. Lord Lieutenants, as I have said, come under the light of public opinion, and are amenable to the tendencies which govern the whole community, and I am convinced that we need have no fear that they will use their power of recommendation for the purpose of promoting the interests of their own party; but popularly-elected bodies are not amenable to public opinion. They are corporate units which have no conscience. Lord Lieutenants are far more amenable to the influence of public opinion than any popularly-elected body could possibly be. Therefore I earnestly press upon the House the extreme undesirability of meddling with this ancient institution in a manner which I believe will destroy its usefulness; and if the House comes to the determination that that institution is no longer fitted for the work it has to do, let them consider the matter from the top to the bottom, and substitute for it some other system better fitted to meet the necessities of the age in which we live; but whatever change we may desire to introduce, let us not, for the first time in English history lay ourselves open to the charge that we have made the magistrates, whose duty it is to administer the law without regard to Party, the nominees of popular authorities and the creatures of popularly-elected assemblies.

MR. SPEAKER: The original question was, "That this Bill be now read a Second time." Since which an Amendment has been moved to leave out the the word "now," and to add at the end of the question the words "this day six months." The question I have to put is that the word "now" stand part of the question.

The House divided:—Ayes 201; Noes 163.—(Division List No. 33.)

Bill read 2°.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) BILL.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) who was to move the Second Reading of this Bill, explained that it was promoted by the corporation of Friendly Societies in London, and that it was based upon a unanimous recommendation of the Town Holdings Committee.

Objection being raised, the Order was postponed.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

On the Order for the Second Reading of this Bill,

SIR R. E. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, that on Wednesday last it was stated in his absence that he had instigated opposition to the Bill. He wished to declare emphatically that he had done nothing of the kind, directly or indirectly. There was no ground for the statement. At the same time, it was his view that a Bill of this kind ought to be introduced by the Government.

Objection was taken to the Motion, and the Order was accordingly postponed.

BOARDS OF CONCILIATION BILL.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University), who rose to move the Second Reading of this Bill explained that it was introduced on behalf of the London Conciliation Board. It was supported by the London Chamber of Commerce, by the Associated Chambers, and by the principal London Trades Unions. If the Government would agree to the Second Reading he would postpone the next stage till after Easter.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said, that the Government could not assent to the proposal to read the Bill a second time on that occasion.

Order postponed.

RULE OF THE ROAD AT SEA.

On the Order for the resumption of the Debate on Sir D. CURRIE's Motion—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the objections which have been raised to the adoption by Order in Council of Rule 15 of the revised International Regulations for preventing collisions at sea, dealing with sound signals in fog, as suggested by the Washington Conference and considered by the maritime Powers,"

***MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES** (Lynn Regis) said, that he must persevere with his Amendment which stood in his name upon the Paper:—

"To leave out the word 'raised,' in line 2, to the end of the question, in order to add the words 'Order in Council of the 30th day of January, 1893, relative to the fixing and screening of ships' side-lights, and to the adoption by Order in Council of the sound signals prescribed by Article 15 and Article 28 of the Revised Regulations for preventing collisions at sea, as set forth in the Board of Trade circular to shipowners of 6th March, 1894.'"

Mr. BRYCE explained that the hon. Member for West Perthshire, who represented the shipowners in this matter, desired that a Committee should be appointed to consider the question of sound fog-signals. The hon. Member for King's Lynn wanted something quite different, which had nothing to do with these fog-signals, with respect to which another Committee had been appointed. The Committee would be presided over by the President of the Admiralty Division of the High Court, and would begin sitting immediately. In these circumstances he trusted the hon. Member would withdraw his Amendment. It hardly became the hon. Member to set his individual will against that of the House and the shipowners. He trusted that the hon. Member would see that the proper way for him to give effect to his wishes was to tender his evidence to the Departmental Committee which was about to sit.

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES hoped that after the long statement of the right hon. Gentleman he should be allowed to make some reply. It was extremely unfair——

*Mr. SPEAKER said the hon. Member could only make an explanation by the indulgence of the House.

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES said that he could not allow the assertions of the right hon. Gentleman, affecting to describe his objects or the views of shipowners, to pass as correct. He had received a mandate from a large Liverpool meeting to move, and must persevere with his Amendment. The right hon Gentleman said that the subject matter of his amendment was to be considered by a Departmental Committee, but many such Committees had already considered it.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. STEPHEN WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock Burghs) sincerely hoped the hon. Member would withdraw his objection and allow the question to be threshed out in Committee.

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: I am ready to explain my position if I am allowed; if not, I shall persist in my Amendment.

Mr. C. W. CAYZER (Barrow-in-Furness) joining in the appeal, said the shipowners were quite satisfied with the procedure proposed by the Board of Trade.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT stated that at a large meeting of the fishing industry, the strongest opinion was expressed that this matter ought not to be longer delayed, because the safety of life and property depended on its making progress.

Mr. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside), who said that when he spoke last week he was in receipt of a telegram purporting to come from the President of the Chamber of Shipping, but which he had since discovered was a forgery, also appealed to the hon. Member.

*On being asked by Mr. Speaker whether he persisted in his amendment, Mr. T. Gibson Bowles said, "Certainly, Sir," and the matter therefore stood adjourned.

SUPPLY.

The Report of Supply (March 19) brought up, and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolutions (March 19) reported and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mellor, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir John Hibbert.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 1) BILL.

"Bill to apply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the Service of the years ending on the thirty-first day of March, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five, and one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow.

House adjourned at Ten minutes before Six o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 21st March 1895.

THE EDUCATION CODE.

LORD NORTON gave notice that on Thursday next, the 28th of March, he would call attention to the new edition of the Educational Code, which would become law at the end of that week.

THE EXPEDITION TO CHITRAL.

VISCOUNT CROSS said, that seeing the Under Secretary of State for India in his place, he wished to ask him whether he could give the House any further information about the movements in Chitral.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord REAY): Chitral is a State under British protection, being tributary to Kashmir, and is the residence of a British agent. In consequence of recent troubles in Chitral, and in response to a request for recognition from the *de facto* ruler, Dr. Robertson, the political officer at Gilgit, was sent in January to Chitral to inquire and report. Since then Umra Khan, the ruler of some neighbouring Pathan States, has invaded Chitral with a large force, and is believed to be now investing Dr. Robertson and his escort in the Chitral fort. Considering the urgent necessity for relieving Dr. Robertson without delay, the Government of India have summoned Umra Khan to evacuate Chitral by the 1st of April, and in view of the possibility of his refusual are preparing a force to march from Peshawur on that date. The Government of India state that they consider no other method of relief to be possible; they have duly notified to the Secretary of State the measures which they propose to take, and they have been informed by him that the steps which they deem necessary for the relief of Dr. Robertson and his party have his full approval.

STRANORLAR AND GLENTIES RAILWAY.

*THE EARL OF MAYO said, that with regard to the question that stood on the paper in his name, he wished to ask the Government when the railway between Stranorlar and Glenties, County Donegal, would be finished and opened for traffic. The railway was 25 miles long, and it had already occupied four years in construction. An extension of time had been granted on three occasions. The contractors stated that the line was completed in every part, and therefore he wished to ask why it had not been opened for traffic. One of the reasons why the line had been delayed was, that the contractors were nearly the only owners of the Lough Swilly line, and it was to their interest not to open, or not to proceed as quickly as possible with a line which would divert traffic from the Lough Swilly line. He had also heard it stated that the contractors proposed bringing an action against the Board of Works for £20,000 for extra work that had been done which was not in the contract. The whole of the satisfactory postal arrangements for the north-west of Donegal were in abeyance in consequence of the line not being opened. He asked the question last Session, but the Prime Minister, who answered the question, said—

> "it was hoped that the railway would be completed by the end of August or beginning of September."

He hoped the Government would use every possible means in their power to get this line opened, as it would be of the greatest benefit to that part of Ireland.

LORD RIBBLESDALE said, the railway between Stranorlar and Glenties, County Donegal, appears to be now finished. The usual notice for the inspection of the line has been received by the Board of Trade. The inspection will take place next week, and the inspecting officer will then report whether the line can be forthwith opened for passenger traffic. Even assuming that it would be necessary, as the result of the inspection, to postpone the opening for passenger traffic, goods traffic might be conveyed, if the junction at Stranorlar is passed by the inspecting officer. I have no information about the Lough Swilly Railway, or about the action for £20,000 which has been brought.

*THE EARL OF MAYO: It was a report.

LORD RIBBLESDALE: As to the delay I quite admit it, but there has been extenuating circumstances. The history of the railway is one of extensions, which have all been duly authorised in the proper way on account of circumstances which seemed to warrant the extensions. It is quite true that the line is a short one, and has taken the best part of four years to complete. State assistance was required and a free grant of £116,000 was assigned to the undertaking, which was then assigned to the Finn Valley Railway, who were to get the line completed before November 1892; then we came to an amalgamation between the Finn Valley and West Donegal Railways. Then there were more delays due to bad weather and to the very high prices for labour, and then the period was further extended to January 1894. The delays have also been due largely to inclement winters, wet summers, and workmen's strikes, and to the provisions of the Board of Trade which obliged this line to be begun at the wrong end, at Glenties, which meant that all the plant had to be carried over 24 miles of mountain road. Her Majesty's Government were most anxious to see the railway opened, and quite recognised its advantages.

THE EARL OF MAYO: Are the West Donegal Company ready to take the line over?

*LORD RIBBLESDALE: I do not know.

SUNDAY BILL.

*LORD HOBHOUSE, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said it was an attempt to obtain relief for a class of Her Majesty's subjects who believed they were doing a good work in a quiet way, and were harassed by the law in doing it. They were those who attempted to provide for themselves and their neighbours some sober, reasonable recreation or refreshment on Sundays apart from the religious observance of the day. Their principal opponents, he thought, were the members of the Lord's Day Observance Society, who held that there were Divine precepts which forbade them to do on the Sunday that which it was not only lawful, but useful and advantageous, to do on other days of the week. Those who were in favour of the Bill held that, on the whole, it was wiser—apart from the positive law necessary for the government of the whole community—that grown men and women should be left to form their own judgments as to the best modes of spending the day. He did not propose even to touch upon the truth or error of the two doctrines. He himself belonged to the second and freer of the two schools of thought, but in his opponents he recognised a powerful faith which had laid hold of powerful minds who had influenced the whole community in this part of the world; he believed mainly for good. Nor did he blame his opponents for having put in motion a law which he thought to be harsh, but which they thought to be right and just. He gave them every credit for good motives, as he expected them to do to their opponents. The leading statutes relating to the employment of Sunday dated back to the reigns of Charles I. and Charles II., and prohibited certain games and trades upon the Sunday. The leading statute with respect to public amusements was passed in the reign of George II. and required licences to be obtained from the proper authority for the performance of public dancing or music, or public entertainment of that kind. These statutes, he believed, would be left totally untouched by this Bill. He said that because there was alarm in some quarters lest there should be an entire absence of legal restriction as to the use of the Sunday if the Bill passed into law. The Act to which the Bill applied was the Act of George III., which was passed in 1781. There was a memorandum attached to this Bill which gave a bird's-eye view of the Act, of the law, and of its recent development, and they would see that three conditions must concur to attract the penalties of that Act—the existence of entertainment or amusement or debate, publicity, and payment. The place where those three conditions concurred became a disorderly house, and all the penalties, whether by statute or common law, attaching to disorderly houses could be enforced, and also certain pecuniary forfeits for which any common informer might sue. That enactment went far beyond what its promoters intended, and far beyond what had been considered to be its effect for many years. The author of the Bill was the well-known Bishop Porteus; and in the Memorandum attached to the Bill would be found an extract from some notes left by that prelate among his papers. It would rather seem as if he had been taken to task for putting a harsh Act on the Statute Book; and in justifying himself he gives his view of the effect of the Act. He says—

> "It restrains no one from speaking, conversing, or writing on religious subjects."

That depended upon where the speaking was.

> "It imposes no other restraint than this (which is surely not a great hardship), that no one shall either pay or be paid for talking blasphemy or profaneness in a public room on the Lord's Day. It takes away, in short, no other liberty than the liberty of burlesquing Scripture and making religion a public amusement and a public trade which I was inclined to think their Lordships would not consider essential marks of religious freedom."

If the Act had done nothing but this the House would not have been troubled with the Bill. But unfortunately the Act did a great deal more. They had only to compare the Preamble of the Act with the enacting part to see that. The Preamble was much to the effect of Bishop Porteus's note. The thing complained of was the pretended discussion by ignorant and incompetent persons for the purpose of bringing Scripture and religion into contempt, and promoting irreligion and profaneness. This was the Preamble. But the enacting part prohibited the debate of any subject whatever — nothing about religion, nothing about incompetent persons or the promotion of irreligion and profaneness, and so on; but public debate on any subject whatever—given the other condition of payment—was struck at by the Act. This was a very severe law, and he trembled to think how often he must have been nearly within, if not quite within, the clutches of the Act. Twenty-five years ago he combined with a number of other persons—ladies and gentlemen—much more eminent than himself, to form the Sunday Lecture Society in London, believing as they did that they were meeting a social want for a different occupation from what was then available on a Sunday afternoon; and since that time he had taken the chair at some other places, and had himself delivered lectures before his own society. Now, according to the law recently expounded, he could not help thinking that if he had not brought himself within the provisions of the Act it was only due to the most melancholy of all causes—that nobody could be found bold enough to enter the witness box and aver that his lecture was either entertaining or amusing. If he were only dull enough he escaped the provisions of the Act, but if, in a moment's forgetfulness, he had been entertaining or amusing, he would have been part of a disorderly meeting in a disorderly house. Supposing a person with a little more wit; and that he bubbled over into a vein of fun, and made his audience laugh, the mischief was done. Then if questions and a discussion followed, and the lecture were entertaining, the same result would ensue. The painstaking lecturer and his earnest audience—grave, silent, and attentive though they might be—and the students who desired instruction, constituted a disorderly assembly, and incurred penalties for which any common informer might sue. He had heard it said this might be the literal construction of the Act, but it was impossible it could be applied in that way. But it had been so applied, and but for that fact their Lordships would not have been troubled with this Bill. Certain lectures were delivered at Leeds under the auspices of the Leeds Sunday Lecture Society, which was formed on the model of the London Sunday Lecture Society, by Mr. Villiers on "Chicago," and by Mr. Max O'Rell on "John Bull, Sandy, and Pat." The lecturers said something comic, and made their audience laugh, whereupon the Lord's Day Observance Society pounced upon them and contended that the lecture hall was a place of entertainment and amusement, and of course there were the other conditions, publicity and payment, and so it was a disorderly house. There was nothing improper in the lectures, no ribaldry. The lectures merely appealed successfully to the risible faculties of the audience; as eminent preachers, in the pulpit had done. The penalties were sued for, and the jury who tried the case found that the place was a place of public entertainment and amusement because the audience were entertained and amused. It was true that the actions failed because the wrong men were sued, but that was only a bit of bad luck for the assailants ; another time, no doubt, they would sue the right men, and strike at these very innocent and useful societies a blow from which they would hardly recover. Now he contended it was not right that the law should be in this state. The tribunals had uttered opinions on this matter. He did not wish to give judicial utterances more weight than they were entitled to. A learned and able lawyer was not always a great authority on matters of general policy. But judges had the working of the law before them in concrete cases, and they saw how the law worked in a crucial way which would not happen to other persons ; and when they came forward to say they thought the law was a bad law they were entitled to some weight in the controversy. In the Brighton Aquarium case some 20 years ago, no doubt there was a considerable commercial element, and the case was clearly within the Act. But even in that case the judges—Lord Blackburn and Lord Field—regretted that the law should have been as they found it. The judge who presided at the trial, and, secondly, the Lords Justices of Appeal, expressed the opinion that the law was exceedingly harsh, or was, at all events, harshly applied. The jury also, twelve men drawn from the middle class, who might be taken as representing the average feeling current among their class, expressed the opinion that the Act under which they had given their verdict should be repealed. He did not wish to exaggerate the amount of injury done by this law, or the number of people whom it affected. He did not suppose he was representing a very a substantial section. It consisted of numerous section of society, but it was orderly, quiet, well-educated people, belonging mainly to the middle and lower middle classes, and to the more solid and steady class of artisans. They were people who desired to have some wholesome recreation on Sunday afternoons, whether by the exercise of their reasoning faculties, or the æsthetic side of their mind, or simply by that pleasant feeling of repose which came over us when we could sit still for an hour or two and simply be amused. They found this refreshing, and they wished to have it on Sundays, some because they were too busy on other days to find time for such things ; others because they were too tired to profit by them even if they could find time ; others again because quite apart from the use of other days, they found there were 24 hours in the Sunday, and that their day was best spent when they employed an hour or two in the kind of mental occupation he had described. The promoters of these lectures had no wish to encroach on the Sunday rest ; they valued it, he believed, as much as any class in England valued it ; but they thought they got the most out of it by employing a portion of it in the way he had described. What they did was esteemed by a considerable number of their neighbours, and they thought that they were playing a useful part in society. They did not go out into the highways and byeways and compel their opponents to come in ; they did not blow trumpets, beat drums and wave flags in the face of their opponents, or do anything to insult them ; but they kept themselves to themselves in rooms obtained by themselves, and they sat there for their own recreation and refreshment without any thought of injuring or offending their neighbours. These people were worthy of the attention of the Legislature and of the relief which was asked for them by the Bill. It would not be denied that since 1781 there had been a great change in public opinion upon the proper mode of employing Sunday. At that time the stricter school of thought was very much in the ascendant, and it might still be in the ascendant ; but the freer school of thought had obtained a great many more adherents. You might see it by walking about out-of-doors ; and the out-door amusements that people thought right showed that a great change of feeling had come over society at large during the last 50 years. Even supposing the opponents of the change he was advocating were in a majority, they certainly were not in such a majority as to be entitled to call themselves the nation, or to be entitled to coerce the minority on the plea that the feelings of the nation ought not to be scandalised. He was pleading for a cause which had usually found favour in the English Parliament, the cause of individual liberty, which surely ought not to be interfered with so long as it did no injury to the interests of the community at large, and so long as it was not exercised to the injury of people's neighbours. The principal change to be made by the Bill would be effected by the second clause. The first and principal object was to enable Sunday lectures to be given. Then it was desired that music might be set more free than it is at present. It might be given now in the open air with prices charged for chairs; and they wanted to give it in a room. They wanted to have it provided that music should not be a disorderly proceeding because it was an entertainment, and that it should not be a disorderly proceeding if a lecture deviated into fun or if a debate ensued upon it. They desired to make charges for admission in order to secure a certain and steady support for these efforts, and in order that they might not be dependent upon the more or less precarious help of the wealthy or the open-handed among their supporters. They did not desire the proceedings should be conducted in a commercial spirit or with any idea of making profit. Sometimes at the end of a course of lectures there was a little deficit, which was made up by well-wishers. Sometimes there was a little surplus, which was used to improve the next course of lectures. Whether the wording of the clause was all that could be desired was a question that could be discussed in Committee. On this question of profit-making a somewhat intemperate paper had been issued by the Lord's Day Observance Society, who said that under the Bill any place of entertainment could be opened on Sunday for the pecuniary advantage of the same persons as benefited on the week-day, and this without the slightest risk of their being judicially called to account. Their only evidence of profit-making was the accounts of the Leeds Sunday Lecture Society. The year's income had been £379, and the expenditure £361. The expenses included the rent of the Coliseum, printing, lecturers, and the general machinery of the Society. So far from the element of personal profit entering into these proceedings, the evidence was that it had been uniformly absent. Where were the profits of the ladies and gentlemen who laboured to arrange these matters? They were not to be found. Of course they must pay for their machinery; but the work of these Societies was sustained entirely by gratuitous labour, and the moment the voluntary Committees ceased to act, the whole Sunday lecture system would come to nought. If a lecturer could not be obtained gratuitously one must be paid for; but was it to be pretended that the movement was carried on for the benefit of the lecturers, or of the owners of the halls, or of the firms who did the printing? It was suggested that when the Bill was passed the Sunday lecture societies would become frauds and shams, bogus societies, and that the real persons getting up lectures with music would be lessees of theatres, and persons of that kind. He envied the imagination of those who could conceive of such a thing. But if it were to happen—if lessees of theatres should become promoters of Sunday lectures with the object of profit they would not be protected by this Bill, and he would not so underrate the vigilance and ability of the Lord's Day Observance Society as to suppose that they would not immediately unmask the fraud and bring the perpetrators to justice. There was another clause, but, as it would not affect the judgment of their Lordships upon this principle of the Bill, he would not discuss it, but conclude by moving that the Bill be read a second time.

*The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY: I think people who are very much interested in this Bill have a certain right to complain on account of the very short time they have had to consider it. The Bill was only circulated on Tuesday, and many people who would be extremely interested in it could not receive it till Wednesday, and it is not possible for them to be here at a day's notice. Your Lordships must know that the Bishops would feel it a reproach not to be present on the occasion of Second Reading of a Bill like this, yet it is totally impossible for them to be here. They cannot alter their arrangements at a moment's notice, for the present season is the season of Lent, when they are holding confirmations every day. At the last moment almost all the Bishops did receive a reminder from me, but not one of them is able to be here except the Bishop of London. As regards the arguments which have been brought before your Lordships, I must confess that I think the noble Lord has stated his case with regard to the Act which is now on the Statute Book very moderately. He has not made the most of it. I believe one of the sets of lectures objected to was delivered by Sir Robert Ball on astronomy, and persons who wish to prevent Sir Robert Ball from delivering lectures on astronomy on Sunday can do so by pleading that he entered a disorderly house, according to Bishop Porteus's explanation of the purpose of the Act, as "a talker of profaneness and blasphemy." The Act in question does certainly want amending. It was never intended to touch such cases. It is not right to use such weapons, and I would not act with persons who use them. But clearly we come to another part of the subject altogether when we ask whether the provisions of this Bill afford the right remedy. That is another affair, and I think your Lordships will admit that this Bill does want safeguarding in very important points. According to this Bill the Statute which is to remain on the Statute Book is not to apply—

"to any house, room, or place opened or used for any lecture or address on science, ethics, social duties, literature, art, or any other kindred subject."

I would ask whether your Lordships can name or think of any subject in the world which could not be called a kindred subject to literature or art. There is no limitation in these words, and they might include a lecture or address on any subject whatever. In the next place the Bill excludes from the operation of the Act any house, room, or place opened or used "for the performance of music." Is "music" to stand in that unqualified way. If so, there is no music-hall programme which might not become the programme of some philanthropic, scientific, and excellent Sunday society. Of course I do not for a moment believe that the noble and learned Lord thought of introducing music-hall programmes, but I want to know how they are to be excluded under this Bill. Then the section goes on—

"if the proceedings are undertaken by their promoters with a view to the public good, and not by way of trade or for the pecuniary profit of the promoters,"

I would ask whether "promoters" would include the proprietors of music-halls, and, if not, why not? What could be easier than the formation of a bogus society as a society to promote entertainments by the performance of music? They need not take any profits, and they would be entirely beyond the reach of the Bill. The noble and learned Lord says that the opponents would be acute enough to discover a way of dealing with such societies. I wish very much the noble and learned Lord would point out to us a way of dealing with so-called political clubs. At this moment there is a large number of them which are nothing but public-houses, and are really open the whole of Sunday against the law, only under the name of a bogus club. If we do not know how to deal with a club we should not be able to deal with a bogus society for the promotion of the kind of entertainment I have referred to. There is one other point I should like to call your Lordships' attention to. We are told that the number of people that would be employed would not be large; but, as I have said, this Bill opens the way to any kind of entertainment, and would bring about what I am perfectly certain the working people of England strongly object to—an enormous increase of Sunday labour. Half-a-million of people are said to be employed on amusements. A large proportion of these would have a seventh day added to their work. I believe the Bill will be very far from pleasing the people for whose benefit it is devised, and that its promoters will find it a very unpopular measure, because it would produce a great reduction of Sunday rest, to which the people are rightly so much attached. I do not know whether your Lordships will say that the Bill shall not be read a Second time; but, if it should be, I should desire that it should be dealt with by a Select Committee, who could consider every word of it.

VISCOUNT CROSS: This matter was brought under my notice some years ago in connection with the Brighton Aquarium. I think that what has fallen from the most reverend Prelate is perfectly true, that people in the country have no notion of what is contained in this Bill. It was only printed a day or two ago, and only placed in our hands yesterday. I think the Bill is very crude in its present form, and would require a great deal of amendment. I would venture, therefore to suggest that it would be better to adjourn the Second Reading *sine die*, because I am sure we could not come to a proper conclusion today. I would then move that a Select Committee be appointed to consider, irrespective of this Bill, what Amendments it is wise to make in the Act of George III. This Bill would then be hung up until after the Committee has reported. If that suggestion meets with your Lordships' approval, I will give notice that on a future day I will move for a Committee.

LORD HOBHOUSE thought he could not do better than fall in with the suggestion of the noble Viscount. He quite agreed that it was inconvenient to take the Second Reading so soon. No doubt those who wished to oppose the Bill had some reason to complain. He fully expected that the Second Reading would have been postponed, and all those who were supporting him were quite prepared for a postponement. He was quite content to accept the particular form of Motion suggested by the noble Viscount.

Debate adjourned.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

On the Motion to go into Committee on this Bill,

LORD KNUTSFORD said, he wished to express his entire concurrence in the observations made by the noble Marquess opposite on a former occasion, with reference to the conduct of Lord Jersey at the Conference at Ottawa. That was a most important Conference, hardly less important than the Colonial Conference of 1887. The Debates were extremely well conducted, and the part Lord Jersey played was most important. His advice when asked for was readily given and very carefully conceived, and he was quite satisfied that his exertions did a great deal to promote the success of the Conference.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The MARQUESS of RIPON) said, he had expressed the other day his sense of the services of Lord Jersey in connection with the Conference, but he would like to say that he entirely agreed with every word that had fallen from his noble Friend.

The House went into Committee, LORD KENSINGTON taking the chair in the absence of the Earl of Morley.

Bill passed through Committee without Amendment.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

DISTRESS BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

House adjourned at half-past Five of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 21st March 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

JOINT STOCK COMPANIES.

Copy presented—

"Of Returns of the names, objects or business, places where business is or was conducted, date of registration, number of persons who signed the memorandum of association, total number of shares taken up by such subscribers, nominal capital, number of shares into which it is divided, number of shares taken up, amount of calls made on each share, and the total amount of calls received of all Joint Stock Companies formed since the first day of January, 1894, to the 31st day of December, 1894, inclusive, distinguishing whether the Companies are limited or unlimited, and also the number of shareholders in each of the said Companies at the date of the last Return, and whether still in operation or being wound up. Of the total number having their registered offices in the City of London, or within five miles of the General Post Office. And of the total number and the paid-up capital of all registered Companies which are believed to be carrying on business at the present time."—*(Mr. Burt.)* [No. 183.]

HONG KONG.

A Petition, presented by Mr. HENNIKER HEATON, from Hong Kong, was, on motion made, read by the Clerk at the Table. The Petition, signed by leading bankers, merchants, and citizens of Hong Kong, prayed for a measure of representative government. The Clerk read the Petition at the Table. It set forth their local grievances, and asked for the people the right of controlling the local expenditure of the country where Imperial considerations are not involved; and for the privilege of electing a majority of the members of the Legislative Council, subject to the supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament, and also to the Governor's veto.

QUESTIONS.

RED SEA LIGHTS.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have yet been able to obtain the assent of the Sublime Porte to erect the four lighthouses at the southern extremity of the Red Sea which are necessary for the security of the navigation, and whether any steps have been taken towards erecting a lighthouse at the eastern end of the Gulf of Aden; if no hope be entertained of such arrangement, will Her Majesty's Government consider the propriety of placing lightships near the most dangerous points of Abu Ail and the Mocha Shoal; and, whether the sum of £40,000 has been surrendered by the Egyptian Government from the excess of light dues hitherto levied by them; and, if so, to what purpose it is being applied?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): A decree issued by His Highness the Khedive of Egypt on this subject was published in the *London Gazette* of the 12th February last. By this Decree the Egyptian Government surrender from and after the year 1894 an annual sum of £E40,000 of the excess of light dues hitherto levied. It is expected that out of this amount a sum of about £60,000 will be available for the construction of new lights in the Red Sea, but the arrangements to be made for this purpose have not yet been completed.

ORDNANCE SURVEY DEPARTMENT.

MR. TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE (Southampton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether some of the so-called labourers in the Ordnance Survey Department are receiving as low a rate of wages as 16s. 6d. per week, and whether, although called labourers, their work is really that of surveyors' assistants, and when in the office they are chiefly employed as assistant printers; and, whether he will take steps to fix their minimum wage at 20s. per week, the same as is now paid to the Admiralty labourers at Deptford?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HERBERT GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): The rate of wages mentioned by the hon. Member is a probationary rate for men who are really learning their work. At the end of the probationary period, which has recently been reduced from three years to one, the labourers employed in the field receive 18s. per week, and the printers' labourers at Southampton and Dublin gradually rise from 18s. to 21s. a week. It would not be correct to describe the former as surveyors' assistants or the latter as assistant printers. I have on more than one occasion looked into the case of these men, at the request of hon. Members behind me, and, taking into account their other privileges and all the conditions under which they work, I do not think that they are insufficiently paid, or that their position compares unfavourably with that of any Admiralty labourers employed on similar duties.

MR. TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture what is the number of civilians employed in the Ordnance Survey Department, and how many are classed as permanent civil assistants entitled to pensions, and how many are called temporary civil assistants not so entitled, and if there is any difference in the nature of the work performed by these two classes; whether a distinction has lately been made in the temporary class, whereby those who joined before 4th January 1873 become entitled to pensions, while those who joined a few days later are excluded; and if he will make it a rule in future that 15 years' continuous service shall qualify an employé for a pension?

*MR. HERBERT GARDNER: The number of civil assistants employed on the Ordnance Survey is 1,672, of whom 336 are entitled to pension and 1,336 are not so entitled. Under an arrangement sanctioned by the Treasury early last year a civil assistant appointed to any one of the 76 important and responsible situations on the Survey will be entitled to pension if he obtains the necessary certificate from the Civil Service Commissioners, but otherwise the right to pension depends not upon the nature of the duties, but upon the date of appointment. My hon. Friend behind me (Sir F. Evans) recently brought under notice the case of the civil assistants appointed between September 1870 and January 1873, and the right to pension has now been conceded by the Treasury to 57 of those assistants on the ground that it was not until the latter date that the final decision abolishing superannuation was notified to the Survey. It rests with the Treasury to say whether any modification of the conditions under which temporary civil assistants have joined the Survey since the 4th January 1873 should be made, but there can be no doubt that at the time of their appointment those assistants had no reason to suppose that their engagement carried with it any right to pension.

PRISONS CLERICAL STAFF.

MR. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, by the closing of prisons and a number of classes, promotion in the prisons clerical staff is congested; and, if so, is it in contemplation to give the staff more permanent relief than that provided by the tentative scheme of December 1890?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): The promotion in the clerical staff of the prisons can hardly be said to be congested, when there are 55 first class clerks who have not attained their maximum salaries and only 15 who have attained them; as regards the second class there are 36 clerks at their maximum, and 24 who have not yet attained it.

THE CHECKWEIGHMAN'S ACT, 1894.

MR. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of John Dykes, who had within the last two months been duly appointed checkweighman by the miners at Bellfield Colliery, Coalburn, Lanarkshire, belonging to William Barr and Sons, but whom the manager, Robert Leggat, had refused and still refuses, to allow to enter upon his duties, although expressing willingness to recognise any other checkweighman whom the miners might appoint; whether he is aware that at this same colliery two years ago this same checkweighman was refused, and that this refusal was urged as one of the reasons for passing the Checkweighman's Act of last Session, and also that in order to avoid this particular checkweighman the manager has altered the payment of the men from that of per ton weight to that of per fathom measurement; whether he will order a prosecution on the ground of there having been a violation or evasion of the Act; and whether he will also consider the expediency of cancelling or suspending the certificates of colliery managers who may be guilty of obstructive violations of the Checkweighman's Act?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds): The

Secretary of State's attention was called last month to a complaint in this matter, and he was informed by the gentleman who made it that he had laid it before the Inspector, and that it might result in a prosecution; and he was requested to consider the expediency of causing the certificates of managers to be suspended in such cases. He has not heard again from the gentleman, but he caused the Inspectors to make a report to him upon the case, which shows that the facts are complicated, and that some of them are disputed. The papers have been placed in the hands of the Scotch Law Officers with a view to a prosecution if they consider that there is a legal case for one. The question of cancellation of certificates cannot arise under Section 27 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1887 until there has been a conviction.

COMPANIES WINDING UP.

MR. ALBAN GIBBS (City of London): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will give instructions that, so far as possible, the cash balance from time to time standing at the credit of particular companies being wound up by the officials of the Board of Trade, under the provisions of The Companies (Winding-up) Act, 1890, shall be invested by the Board of Trade under Section 17 of the Act, so that the income derived therefrom may go to the credit of the particular company, instead of being paid over to the Treasury under Section 16 of the Act, to be invested as part of a general fund the income of which goes to the Board of Trade towards payment of their expenses; and whether, seeing that the income derived by the Board of Trade from these investments during the year ended 31 March, 1894 was £13,926, and that the Board have made large profits every year since they undertook the liquidation of Companies, he will consider the feasibility of returning to the different companies some part at least of the income obtained by investing their funds?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): I have no power to give the instructions asked for. It rests with the Committee of Inspection, in each case, to request the Board of Trade to invest funds for the benefit of the company. The Board of Trade are not making large profits from fees and investments under the Companies (Winding-up) Act. The income, which during the early years of the new Act showed a surplus, it is not now materially, if at all, in excess of the necessary expenditure.

THE BALFOUR GROUP OF COMPANIES.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it has been, and is, the general practice of the Official Receivers of the Board of Trade, when winding up companies under the Act of 1890, to wind them up by carrying them on, and to borrow money for that purpose, and, in particular, whether the Official Receiver acting with regard to the Jabez Balfour Group of Companies has borrowed £300,000, in order to expend it in carrying on the Salisbury Street property; and whether he will state the total amount of the sums borrowed by Official Receivers in connection with the Balfour Group of Companies, and the rates of interest paid thereon?

MR. BRYCE: It is not the general practice of the Official Receivers when winding up companies to carry on the business, or to borrow moneys for that purpose; on the contrary, it is their general practice to realise and distribute assets as speedily as possible. But in certain cases, where an immediate forced realisation would be disastrous to the interests of the shareholders or creditors, or both, Official Receivers, when acting as liquidators, and when so desired by the Committee of Inspection or under the sanction of the Court, have carried on the business, and have in the name of the company borrowed moneys in order to protect the assets from a forced realisation. But such moneys are borrowed solely on the security of the assets of the company, and without any liability on the part of the Official Receiver or the State. In the particular group of cases referred to by the hon. Member the Official Receiver has borrowed various moneys from time to time, amounting collectively to about £1,280,000, the amount outstanding at the present date being £813,000. Interest is paid at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, and there is to be a commission of 10 per cent. upon any surplus ultimately available for distribution among the unsecured creditors or contributories. The money has been borrowed solely on the security of the assets of the various companies, and for the purpose partly of completing properties and rendering them marketable, and partly of paying off prior mortgagees, who were threatening an immediate sale or foreclosure, and some of whom were receiving interest at the rate of 16 per cent. per annum. These transactions have been entered into only at the express desire of the Committee of Inspection, and after approval by the Court. The Official Receiver is himself of opinion that if this course had not been adopted, and if the properties had been left to be realised by the mortgagees, there would have been no surplus available for the unsecured creditors.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND.

MR. J. W. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether any steps have been taken in the direction indicated by him a year ago to a deputation of those interested in the higher education in Scotland, of discussing a scheme for co-ordinating the work of the Science and Art and Agricultural Departments with the Department of Scottish Education; and whether he hopes soon to be able to submit some such scheme to the House?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Departments have been in consultation upon this matter, and I am in hopes that some arrangement will be found possible. But several difficult questions are involved, and these require most careful consideration.

SCOTCH FISHING HARBOURS.

SIR LEONARD LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has recently received petitions from the County Council for Shetland, asking that some additional leading lights may be erected at the entrance to several of the chief fishing harbours, and that some of the principal islands still without telegraphic communication may be connected by cable; and whether any provision has been made in the Estimates for carrying out these works?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: I have duly received the petitions referred to by the hon. Member, and they will be carefully considered, along with similar claims from other districts. The sum at my disposal for carrying out the further construction of lights and telegraphic extensions is £2,500, of which about £1,000 is already allocated to the maintenance of existing lights erected under the Highlands and Islands Public Works Vote.

THE MURDER OF MR. BIRCH AT PERAK.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether there are in existence any documents in the nature of evidence purporting to connect the ex-Sultan of Perak, Abdullah, with the murder of the British resident, Mr. Birch, in 1874, by certain Malays, other than those published in the Papers laid before Parliament and communicated to the ex-Sultan; and, if so, whether, in face of the persistent affirmations of innocence on the part of the accused Prince and the unanimous testimony of those about him to the same effect, he will communicate to the ex-Sultan or to the hon. Member for Canterbury the documents referred to, so that His Highness may have an opportunity of refuting or disproving them?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I am not aware that any documents bearing on the question of Abdullah's alleged complicity in the murder of Mr. Birch are in existence other than those already published in the Papers laid before Parliament.

VACCINATING SCHOOL CHILDREN.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is he aware that the medical officer of Ballymahon Dispensary District entered the national schools of the said district, and there, during school hours, vaccinated the children, without either the permission of the managers of the schools or the consent of the parents of the children; by what authority, or by whose directions, did he perform this operation, as the Poor Law Guardians of the union, as also the members of the dispensary committee, disclaim all responsibility in connection with the matter; is he aware that, when asked for his authority for doing so, the medical officer alleged having received directions from the Local Government Board; and, if the medical officer undertook to perform this duty without authority, is he to be paid out of the rates for any number he asserts he has successfully revaccinated; and, if so, what check can there be on the account furnished by him to the Poor Law Guardians?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Local Government Board have communicated with the medical officer referred to in the question, but have not, I believe, received his reply. Perhaps my hon. Friend will repeat the question on Monday next.

SAMOA.

*MR. J. F. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the letter of the late Robert Louis Stevenson on Samoan affairs, published in *The Daily Chronicle* of the 18th instant; whether he is in a position to affirm or deny the accuracy of Mr. R. L. Stevenson's statement that Mataafa, after surrendering, was brought to Apia in the ship of Captain Bickford, who pointed to a British ensign and declared he was safe under that flag; whether, notwithstanding this declaration, Mataafa and his chiefs were transferred to a German warship and carried away to exile in the Marshall Islands; whether any official report of the circumstances attending the deportation of Mataafa to the Marshall Islands has been received from Captain Bickford; and, if so, whether there is any objection to making it public; whether he can suggest any explanation of the nominal fine of 100 rifles imposed on Tamasese for a serious rebellion, as compared with the punishment of indefinite exile to a low island, to which Mataafa has been condemned, for merely constructive rebellion; and, what is the latest official information with respect to the condition and treatment of Mataafa, and the facilities, if any, afforded him for communicating with his friends?

Mr. D. Sullivan.

SIR E. GREY: I have seen the letter in question. Mataafa surrendered in consequence of an ultimatum sent to him by the consuls of the three Powers, and was taken to Apia in H.M.S. *Katoomba*, commanded by Captain Bickford, who gave him no assurance except that his life would be spared. This assurance was kept and Mataafa was, under an agreement between the three Treaty Powers, taken to the Marshall Islands in a German man-of-war. Captain Bickford had no concern with the deportation. His duty ended after he had brought Mataafa to Apia. The circumstances as regards Tamasese and Mataafa were quite different. The former surrendered peaceably on arranged terms; the latter when in open rebellion on the condition only of safety for his life. The latest information is that Mataafa and his chiefs are well treated; arrangements have been made that they shall be joined by members of their families, but communications with the outside are of course under strict control.

*MR. HOGAN: Is the hon. Baronet aware that Mataafa is a devoted Catholic, that in his present place of exile he has no facilities for the exercise of his religion, and that he feels this deprivation very acutely? Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson suggests that Mataafa's place of exile should be changed to Fiji, where a number of Catholic priests are stationed, where, in Mr. Stevenson's own words, he would have—

> "the food and fresh water of his childhood, where some of us could see him, where we could write to him and receive answers, where he might have a tolerable old age."

Will the hon. Baronet use his influence with Germany to secure the early removal of Mataafa from the Marshall Islands to Fiji, and thus carry out the dying wish of a writer who has endeared himself to the English-speaking world?

SIR E. GREY said, as it appeared that Mataafa was being well treated where he was, there seemed to be no pressing necessity for urging the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman. He was informed that Mataafa had full facilities for the exercise of his religion.

*MR. HOGAN: My information—and it comes from a local authority of the highest repute—is directly to the contrary.

THE SCOTCH FISHERY BOARD.

MR. T. R. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether it is the intention of the Government to remove the Fishery Board of Scotland from the office in Edinburgh, which it at present occupies in the centre of the city.

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: I am glad to inform the hon. Member that the Government have no intention of removing the Fishery Board from their present office in Edinburgh, which is admirably situated for the conduct of their business.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, whether he is aware that some of the assistant keepers in the South Kensington Museum are receiving smaller salaries than the junior assistant keepers, and even than some of the messengers, though they are placed over them and superintend their work; whether any correspondence has passed on the subject; and whether this system is to be continued.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (MR. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W. R., Rotherham): There has been some correspondence with the Treasury with a view to obviate the present somewhat anomalous condition of things. I am glad to say that arrangements are on the point of being concluded with the Civil Service Commission for an entrance examination instead of an examination for both the office of Junior Assistant and Assistant Keeper, so that the succession to the latter office will be by promotion from the former. This will, to a great extent, if not wholly, remove the present anomaly.

POTATO DISEASE IN IRELAND.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Irish Land Commission have made experiments with the Strawson process for the prevention of the potato disease in Ireland; and, if so, what have been the results?

MR. J. MORLEY: Field experiments for testing the value of applications of copper sulphate, and lime to the potato plant, as a preventive of potato disease, were carried out by the Agricultural Department of the Irish Land Commission in the years 1891, 1892 and 1893. The results obtained from the experiments conducted in 1892 and 1893, proved conclusively that a proper application of the mixture used is of great value as a preventive of potato disease; it was not, therefore, considered necessary to continue the field experiments in 1894, but field demonstrations were given in a small district of the counties Derry and Antrim in that year, the same mixture being used, The firm of Messrs. Strawsons, Limited, supply a concentrated mixture of copper sulphate and lime for application to the potato plant by spraying machines in the ordinary way, but this special mixture was not used in any of the experiments or demonstrations carried out by the Land Commission.

ACTION AGAINST IRISH CONSTABLES.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to the action brought against five constables for illegal arrest, assault, and battery of a man, named Charles Braynor, in which the decree given by County Court Judge Webb was affirmed at Lifford by Mr. Justice Holmes on the 14th instant, and whether the costs of the Defendants are to be paid out of public funds; and if so, will he explain why?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am aware of the facts of this case. No application for costs has yet been made by the constables, and should such an application be received, the matter will be considered with care. It appears that Judge Holmes was satisfied that Braynor was drunk on the occasion of his arrest, but that the evidence did not sustain the joint charge of drunkenness and disorderly behaviour, and the point at issue in the case seems to have been the power of the police to arrest for simple drunkenness. The action of the police on the occasion, was, I understand, *bonâ fide*.

MINING AND MINERAL STATISTICS.

MR. S. T. EVANS (Mid Glamorgan): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his attention has been directed to the Report of the

Departmental Committee on Mining and Mineral Statistics recommending amongst other matters the publication of early returns of fatal accidents, the addition of information concerning the numbers employed in mines and quarries, further statistics as to non-fatal accidents, the earlier publication of the reports of Inspectors of Mines, and the publication of a general annual report to be compiled by the Mineral Statistics Branch under the superintendence of an Editing Inspector; and, whether he will take early steps to carry out all or some of the recommendations of the Committee?

Mr. ASQUITH: Yes, Sir; I have adopted all the recommendations of the Committee mentioned in the question. The early return of fatal accidents was published on the 29th of January, and active steps are being taken to give effect to the other recommendations.

FRANCE AND MADAGASCAR.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether Her Majesty's Government propose, during the present hostilities between France and Madagascar, to allow either belligerent to make use of ports or roadsteads in British Possessions or Dependencies (as, for example, at Mauritius, or the Cape, or Aden) for warlike purposes, or to coal or provision themselves beyond what may be necessary for immediate use; does the Foreign Enlistment Act, 1870, apply to this case; and, are Her Majesty's subjects entitled to exercise the same rights as in time of peace, or are they subject to the obligations lying on neutrals in time of war; and, if the latter, at what date did these obligations begin to take effect?

Sir EDWARD GREY: The situation is, for the purposes of this question, the same as that which has existed on previous occasions when Great Britain has been carrying on hostilities in different parts of the world. In these cases, while there have been in fact hostilities proceeding, it has not been thought necessary to bring into operation the obligations which would arise from the recognition of a state of war; no proclamations of neutrality have been issued, nor has the trade of other countries, or the use of their ports been in any way curtailed. Her Majesty's Government propose at present to follow the same course, but no part of British territory would be allowed to be used as a base for hostile operations.

IRISH RAILWAYS.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury—(1) what is the amount available under various Acts of Parliament for the annual guarantee towards the payment of interest on the construction of railways in Ireland; (2) what has been the average amount which the Treasury has been called upon to pay up to the present in respect of this guarantee, and what has been the maximum in any one year; and (3) will he give a Return of the railways in respect of which a guarantee has been given by the Treasury; the amount guaranteed; the corresponding amount guaranteed by baronies or counties; and the amount, if any, which railway companies taking over the new lines have undertaken to be responsible for in reduction of such guarantees?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir John Hibbert, Oldham): The answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is £30,722. As regards the second paragraph, it would be misleading to give any average, as lines have only come into working order by degrees. The maximum audited payment hitherto was £19,506 in 1893-4, and the estimated payment for 1895-6 is £25,386. The information asked for in the third paragraph will be found at page 71 of the Estimates for the coming year. No responsibility on the part of any company is known to exist except in the case of the Claremorris and Swinford line, where the Waterford Company is to pay to the County Treasurer such sum as may be necessary to keep the net receipts in each half-year up to £400.

THE EXPEDITION TO CHITRAL.

Sir W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether a force of 14,000 men has been organised to proceed against Umra Khan, some 200 miles beyond the Indian frontier; and, if so, whether the expedition is being sent under instructions from the Secretary of State; whether he will inform the House what action on the part of

Umra Khan has rendered this expedition necessary; and whether the expenses of this military operation are being defrayed from the Revenues of India; and, if so, whether this is being done in accordance with the provisions of Section 55 of 21 & 22 Vic., c. 106.

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: The facts are approximately as stated in the first clause of the hon. Member's question, but the distance is less than 200 miles. Chitral is a State under British protection, being tributary to Kashmir, and is the residence of a British Agent. In consequence of recent troubles in Chitral, and in response to a request for recognition from the *de facto* ruler, Dr. Robertson, the political officer at Gilgit, was sent in January to Chitral to inquire and report. Since then Umra Khan, the ruler of some neighbouring Pathan States, has invaded Chitral with a large force, and is believed to be now investing Dr. Robertson and his escort in the Chitral fort. Considering the urgent necessity for relieving Dr. Robertson without delay, the Government of India have summoned Umra Khan to evacuate Chitral by the 1st of April; and in view of the possibility of his refusal, are preparing a force to March from Peshawur on that date. The Government of India state that they consider no other method of relief to be possible; they have duly notified to the Secretary of State the measures which they propose to take, and they have been informed by him that the steps which they deem necessary for the relief of Dr. Robertson and his party have his full approval. The expense of these preparations is being defrayed by the Government of India, and the Secretary of State is advised that nothing has been done in contravention of Section 55 of the Act for the Better Government of India.

A VOTER'S GRIEVANCE.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Mr. Robert Buchan, of Buckie, in Banffshire, who duly paid his rates, but whose name was removed from the list of voters for the municipal election because the collector of burgh rates had erroneously reported that he had failed to pay his rates; whether he will cause inquiry to be made into the facts of the case, and whether any redress is now possible; and, if not, whether he will consider what amendment of the law might be made to prevent similar grievances in future?

SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN: My attention has first been called to the case by the hon. Member. I regret that Mr. Buchan's name should not have been recorded on the list of voters, and that he lost the opportunity afforded to him by the publication of the list of making his claim. I fear there is no available means by which his name can now be inserted in the list, and I accordingly see no sufficient reason for causing any inquiry into the matter.

LORD THURLOW.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the statement that the Master of the Rolls, in the Appeal Court on Saturday 16th March, in the case of Lord Thurlow, to the effect that there was evidently something behind the action of the Official Receiver in appealing against the order of Mr. Registrar Linklater, refusing to adjudicate the debtor bankrupt; and also to the effect that no Official Receiver had any right to interfere, except under the order and directions of the Court; and that no Department of the Government had any right to interfere, it was the Court above which could interfere; and whether the Department of the Board of Trade had given to the Official Reciver any instructions or directions with reference to his interference in this case, or had authorised him so to interfere, or had empowered him to incur costs or other expenses in regard to such interference?

MR. BRYCE: My attention has been called to the matter referred to, but I have as yet only seen a brief and necessarily imperfect report in the newspapers of the judgment. The appeal from the Registrar's decision, refusing to adjudicate Lord Thurlow a bankrupt, was taken and conducted as such appeals always are, on the advice of the Law Officers of the Crown; but I am not aware that the Official Receiver in any way interfered in the matter except by exercising the ordinary right of appeal which he is entitled to do without any directions from the Court, and which it is obviously proper that he should do upon the opinion of the Law Officers. The costs incurred in the appeal were sanctioned in accordance with the usual practice by the Board of Trade.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: Had the Official Receiver the authorisation of the Board of Trade to incur costs before starting any of the proceedings?

MR. BRYCE: The Official Receiver had the opinion of the Law Officers and the sanction of the Board of Trade.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: Does the right hon. Gentleman mean the Attorney and Solicitor Generals?

MR. BRYCE: Certainly.

PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS.

MR. W. H. MYERS (Winchester): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, when he is going to issue an order prescribing forms for accounts for Parish Councils; and whether the current accounts are to be made up for the purposes of audit to 31st March next or to 31st March, 1896?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. G. J. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): The Order is now in preparation, and I hope that it will shortly be issued. The current accounts of Parish Councils must be made up to the 31st instant, and they will be audited up to that date.

LANCASHIRE ENDOWED CHARITIES.

MR. S. WOODS (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I beg to ask the Parliamentary Charity Commissioner, when the Digest of the Endowed Charities of Lancashire will be issued?

THE PARLIAMENTARY CHARITY COMMISSIONER (Mr. F. S. STEVENSON, Suffolk, Eye): It is expected that the Supplemental Digest of Endowed Charities in the County of Lancaster will be issued in the course of the present Session. The Digest, together with the General Digest of Endowed Charities for the county printed by order of the House in the year 1869 will furnish the particulars of all the Charities of the county. If further information should be required, proceedings should be taken under the Charity Inquiries Expenses Act, 1892.

POST OFFICE UNIFORMS.

MR. J. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether a contract extending over three years, and valued at £300,000 per annum, for supplying uniforms for the Postal Service, has been given to a contractor at Newcastle-under-Lyne; whether the contract was formerly held by a London firm; and under what circumstances it has been transferred to Newcastle?

MR. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether the whole of the clothing contracts for the Metropolitan service of the Post Office, which have been held for many years by a London firm, have now been given to a firm in Staffordshire; whether he is aware that a large number of persons will thus be thrown out of employment; and what were the amounts of the tenders for each contract respectively made by the London firm and by the firm to which the contracts were given? I also beg to ask a supplementary question of which I have given private notice. Are the contractors to whom the Post Office clothing contracts have been given the same firm which about three years ago took the contract for the Metropolitan Police clothing, and after trying to carry it out for a few months, asked and obtained leave from the Home Office to give up the contract; and what steps the Postmaster General has taken to assure himself that the contractors are responsible persons and able to carry out the present contract?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): I purposely directed that separate tenders for making up the cloth garments for Post Office uniforms should be invited for the Metropolitan area and for six other districts, so that as far as possible the work should be localised and that manufacturers in every part of the country might have the opportunity of tendering for their own districts. The tenders which I received from the successful Staffordshire firm were the lowest in the case of each district in Great Britain for which the tenders were invited. I had no alternative, therefore, but to give this firm the contract. But I may point out that the amount involved is not £300,000 a year but

£300,000 in three years, or £100,000 a year; and that of this £100,000 no less than £75,000 represents the cost of the cloth which is supplied by the Department to the firm, and £10,000 the cost of trimming, &c. The real sum involved, therefore, is not £300,000, but £15,000 a year, which covers the wages paid and the contractor's profit. There was a considerable difference in the case of each of the tenders between the successful firm and the London firm which previously held the contract, but it would not be in accordance with the accepted practice to state the amount of each tender. I am afraid that the consequence must be to throw a certain number of persons in London out of employment, but I hope that some of them may be able to follow the work. As regards the incident mentioned in the Supplementary Question I am informed that it took place not three years ago but about eight years ago, when the firm was in a smaller way of business; and I am assured that they are fully able to carry out the present contract.

Mr. W. ALLEN (Newcastle-under-Lyme) asked whether it was not a fact that the tender of the Newcastle firm was lower than that of others for this contract; whether their work had not given satisfaction on previous occasions; and whether they did not pay as high rates of wages in all cases, and in some higher, than other firms tendering?

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: I do not know what the rates of pay at Newcastle-under-Lyme are, but there is the fair wages clause in the contract.

Mr. J. KEIR HARDIE: May I ask whether, in giving out the contracts, allowance was made for the different rate of wages prevailing in Newcastle-under-Lyme as compared with London?

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: I have no knowledge of the rate of wages. The fair wage clause was introduced.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON: As this is a United Kingdom, is there any objection to receiving tenders from any part of the country.

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: There is no objection to tenders from the part of the United Kingdom which the hon. Member represents. A tender from an Irish firm for the supply for Ireland was accepted on the ground that it was as low as any other tender.

SWAZILAND.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Swazis have agreed to accept Boer administration; and whether any Boer armed force has entered Swaziland?

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Sir H. Loch has telegraphed a summary of the proceedings which took place at the meeting of the South African Republican Commission with the Swazi King, Queens, and a large number of Swazis. All those attending were unarmed. General Joubert, taking Ubunu by the hand, said that he recognised him on behalf of the South African Republic as paramount chief. General satisfaction was expressed at this statement. The Swazis requested permission for "killing off, which was, of course, refused. The meeting was very orderly. Immediately after the meeting the Generals Joubert and Smit started on their return journey to the Transvaal. No Boer armed force, except the escort accompanying the generals, has entered Swaziland.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I wish to know whether the Swazis have agreed to accept the Boer administration, and whether the Swazi King was informed of the meaning of the statement made to him by the Boer generals?

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I take it for granted that what was said by General Joubert was translated into Swazi. That would be the only way of conducting such proceedings. As regards the question, I have to say that it is apparent the Swazis have peaceably accepted the administration of the South African Republic.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Can the hon. Member state whether the Boers have initiated or set up any form of direct administration in Swaziland, or whether the relations between the Swazis and the Boers are confined to the simple statement of the Boer representative that the new King was their captain-general?

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: No. The position, as I understand, is this: A special Commission of Generals Joubert and Smit was sent there to see the King, and to recognise him as paramount chief. Besides, there is a Transvaal administrator in the country, whose name was submitted to us, and we approved it. There is also a British Consul, Mr. Stuart; therefore, the Boer administration is practically existing in Swaziland.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I wish to know whether the hon. Member has been directly informed by Her Majesty's representative in Swaziland that the Swazis have recognised the administration of Mr. Krogh, or of whomever has been named Boer agent in Swaziland?

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I must ask notice of the question.

Mr. C. R. DISRAELI (Cheshire, Altrincham): Can the hon. Gentleman give the date of that communication?

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: It was received yesterday.

Mr. DISRAELI: Is it true that those communications are under the control of the Boers?

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: That has been stated; but the statement is absolutely untrue.

Mr. DISRAELI: Then why cannot you get more information?

No answer was given.

POST OFFICE SORTERS.

Mr. J. KEIR HARDIE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he received a petition from 200 sorters at the General Post Office on 12th December, 1893, and what reply, if any, has been forwarded?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: No trace can be found of any memorial from sorters in the General Post Office bearing the date named. It is possible that the memorial referred to is one dated the 16th November, 1893. This memorial, however, asked that a deputation might be received by the Postmaster General. This request was acceded to, and some of the representations made by the deputation, which was received in May last, are still under consideration. I may add that a decision on those representations would doubtless have been arrived at long ago were it not that, in one important particular, the memoralists undertook to show how that which they asked could be done at little, if any, additional cost; and a plan has been only recently received, and, that, as I understand, does not express their views as a body.

DEAD BODIES FROM THE SEA.

*Mr. W. F. D. SMITH (Strand, Westminster): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government contemplate proposing any change in the law which now lays upon anyone picking up a corpse at sea the expense of interment?

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL: The Government are not prepared to initiate legislation, but they will favourably consider any proposal in the direction indicated.

THE VICTORIA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, MADRAS.

Mr. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he is aware that the Victoria Technical Institute, Pantheon Street, Madras, founded 22nd March, 1890, to commemorate the Jubilee of the Queen-Empress, is now completed at the cost of £14,000, and that the purposes for which the building was intended, as set forth by an inscription on the foundation. stone, were those of a free library and Victoria Technical Institute, the latter being an already established body; and whether the Government have refused to apply any portion of the building to technical instruction, but have handed it over instead to the Madras Dramatic Society, an amateur theatrical society of which the Governor is the patron; if so, will he order that the building shall be devoted to the purpose for which it was originally intended?

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL: The Secretary of State has no knowledge of the circumstances to which my hon. Friend's question refers, but he will make inquiry.

MALABAR MARRIAGE SYSTEM.

Mr. W. S. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, with reference to the Commission which was appointed in 1889 by the Government of India to inquire into the marriage system prevailing in Malabar, and as that Commission reported in December 1891, have final orders yet been passed upon it by the Secretary of State?

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL: The Commissioners were divided in opinion, but the Indian Authorities preferred the views expressed by the President, the late Sir T. Muthesamy Aiyar, and the Bill is under revision accordingly. The

Secretary of State has not yet seen the revised Bill, nor has he passed any orders on the subject.

THE HEMP DRUGS COMMISSION.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he has yet received the Report of the Hemp Drugs Commission; and when the Report of the Opium Commission is likely to be issued?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: The Secretary of State has received copies of the Ganja Commission Report, but not of the orders passed by the Government of India thereon; as was stated by the Secretary of State on the 11th of last month, it is anticipated that the Report of the Opium Commission will be ready by Easter.

CHARGE AGAINST A MEDICAL MAN.

MR. J. KEIR HARDIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the unusual action of a court of Crewe magistrates in holding a court in the evening of the 1st of September, 1894, from 8 p.m. to 11.20 p.m., to hear a charge against a certain Dr. Lawton of criminal assault, when the defendant was acquitted upon his own unsupported evidence; and whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into the whole circumstances of the case?

MR. ASQUITH: Dr. Lawton was, I am informed, on his way to America with his family when arrested at Liverpool, and a special court was summoned in the evening so as to enable him, if acquitted, to catch his ship and join his family. There is no reason for supposing the magistrates acted with any bias or unfairness. In any case, the matter is not one in which I could interfere, since the defendant was acquitted.

COTTARS IN LEWIS.

MR. J. G. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has received a petition from a number of landless cottars, residing at Breanish, Uig, Island of Lewis, in which they express a hope that the present Government will take action on their behalf without delay, and giving amongst other reasons for their urgent application that they are without land, that there is sufficient land in the neighbourhood suitable for crofts now under sheep and deer, and that their families were evicted from this land; and whether he sees his way to bring in a Bill this Session to meet the case of these and other people similarly situated in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: I have received the Petition to which the hon. Member refers. I cannot, as I have more than once intimated, announce the proposals of the Government until I introduce the Crofters' Bill.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS WORKS ACTS.

MR. J. G. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether any works have been treated as exceptional cases under Clause 6 of The Western Highlands and Islands (Scotland) Works Acts, 1891; and, if so, will he state how many, the names of the places and works, the cost of each, the amount of the local subscription, and the value of the free labour in each case?

***SIR G. O. TREVELYAN**: The pier at Golspie, Sutherlandshire, has been treated as exceptional under Clause 6 of the Western Highlands and Islands Works Act of 1891. The original estimate of this work was £2,000, of which Government agreed to pay £1,400. The amount locally subscribed was £600. There was no free labour promised. While the work was in execution urgent reasons were shown for extending it 50 feet further into the sea at a cost of £400, of which Government were asked to pay £300, raising the estimate to £2,400, of which Government were to pay £1,700. After consulting with my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade I considered that this might be treated as an exceptional case, and the larger scheme was sanctioned accordingly.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state how much of the sum voted last year for works under the Western Highlands and Islands (Scotland) Works Act, 1891, had been expended up to 1st March, 1895?

***SIR G. O. TREVELYAN**: The sum expended up to March 1, 1895, on works under the Western Highlands and

Islands (Scotland) Works Act, 1891, was £5,000.

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can now state more definitely when the Report of the Highlands and Islands Commission will be issued; and if he can say how soon he will be able to introduce the Highland Land Bill to be founded on the said Report?

*SIR G. O. TREVELYAN : The Report and the evidence of the Highlands and Islands Commission has now been presented to Parliament, and the Stationery Office has been requested to issue the Report at the earliest possible date. I shall introduce the Crofters' Bill at the earliest opportunity that occurs after the report is in the hands of Members.

MR. WEIR : Will the right hon. Gentleman state what the earliest possible date will probably be?

*SIR G. O. TREVELYAN : It will be the earliest possible day.

THE TRAINING SHIP "NORTHAMPTON."

MR. WEIR : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state when the *Northampton*, or other training ship, may be expected to visit Stornoway?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee) : The *Northampton* may be expected to arrive at Stornoway about May 23.

ERBUSAIG ROSS-SHIRE.

MR. WEIR : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received a petition from the inhabitants of Erbusaig, Lochalsh, Ross-shire, to the effect that, in the interests of the fishing and crofter population, there should be at least three openings in the embankment of the new railway at that place; and whether steps will be taken to prevent the construction of the embankment without the necessary openings to the sea.

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN : I have received the petition referred to by the hon. Member, and have transmitted it to the Board of Trade, within whose province the matter lies, for consideration.

LIGHTHOUSE EXPENDITURE.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade to inform the House what expenditure for new lighthouses, and new apparatus for existing lighthouses has been sanctioned by the Board of Trade during the ten years ended 31st December, 1824, on the application of each of the three Lighthouse Boards—the Trinity House, the Board of Northern Lighthouses, and the Commissioners of Irish Lights respectively?

MR. BRYCE : Full information as to the expenditure by each of the three Lighthouse Authorities will be found in the Account of the Mercantile Marine Fund, contained in the Civil Service Appropriation Accounts. The latest return is at page 181 of the Appropriation Accounts for 1893–4. If the hon. Member desires any further information on the subject, and will communicate with me, I will give him whatever I can.

SHEPHERDS' CHILDREN AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

SIR M. STEWART (Kircudbright): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if the Scotch Education Department, in the interests of education, will recommend a small grant for the lodging of the children of shepherds and such persons, living in remote parts of the moorlands, to enable them to send their children to the Board Schools, seeing that these young children cannot walk the great distances, although compelled to attend school?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN : The Code offers special grants for making educational provision for children living in remote districts, and we are prepared to make inquiry, and suggest means by which this may be done in all cases brought before us. But the Department has no power to make a payment from the Parliamentary Grant towards the lodging of children, nor can the School Boards defray this cost from the School Fund.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN SCOTLAND.

SIR MARK STEWART : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has considered the great inconvenience to which local parish council voters in large parishes must be put at the coming election, when, in order to record their votes, they will have to walk great distances, in some cases nine miles, seeing that there is only one polling station in each parish; is he aware that two polling places were allowed to those parishes at School Board elections; and if he will make some arrangement before the 2nd day of April whereby this inconvenience may be remedied?

SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN: The matter referred to by the hon. Member lies by Statute within the province of the returning officer; but I have communicated on the subject with the county clerk with a view to seeing whether it is possible to make a different arrangement.

MR. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman has received from the county which I represent a resolution passed at a large public meeting there stating dissatisfaction felt at the existing arrangements; whether the returning officer has been asked to make the necessary arrangements; and whether the Government is prepared to give him the authority to do so?

SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN: I am not sure whether I have received such a resolution. We cannot go beyond the Act, but we are quite prepared to construe the Act in as large a manner as possible, in order to enable the returning officer to make such provision for the polling stations as is desirable.

SIR MARK STEWART: If the returning officer takes the responsibility of establishing polling places, will the Scotch office exonerate him?

SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN: We cannot go beyond the Statute. Up to a very late date these changes can be made by the local authority, if it chooses to make them.

AGED POOR COMMISSION.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when the Report of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor will be issued; and whether he will at once lay the evidence upon the Table?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Report and evidence have now been laid before the Queen. As soon as they are returned to me they shall be laid before Parliament and issued.

ACCOMMODATION FOR MEMBERS.

MR. W. R. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether, in view of the evidence laid before the House of Commons Accommodation Committee during last Session, concerning the number of rooms at the disposal of the officials of the House, he will endeavour to make arrangements for increasing the accommodation for Members before a new Speaker is appointed?

THE FIRST COMMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I am afraid I cannot undertake to do what the hon. Member asks.

MR. CREMER: Has the right hon. Gentleman considered the proposal to reappoint the Committee which sat last year?

MR. H. GLADSTONE: I do not think it would be desirable to reappoint the Committee. No practical advantage would come of it.

ARMENIA.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government has approached the Governments of Russia and France, inviting their immediate and effective co-operation, with a view to putting an end to the barbarous misdeeds, tortures and murders which have been and are being perpetrated by the agents of the Porte in Armenia and other parts of Asiatic Turkey, and of which many examples are given in the telegrams of the special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in its issue of the 18th instant, dated from Knoussaberd, 9th March, and in the telegrams appearing in other papers from Reuter, &c.?

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I rise to order. Before the question is answered, I wish to ask whether it is in order in a question to make against the agents of a friendly Power the charges made in the question?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman had better omit that part which presumes that barbarous outrages have been committed.

MR. SCHWANN: Alleged, Sir.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Cases of hardship or ill-treatment, which have been brought to the notice of Her

Majesty's Government by the reports of British Consular Officers, have already formed the subject of separate representations to the Porte. I can assure my hon. Friend that Her Majesty's Government will spare no effort to promote the effective co-operation of other Powers to secure the introduction of reforms in the Government of Armenia, but, in our opinion, this object would not be attained or helped by making further proposals for international action at this moment.

*SIR. E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Can the hon. Gentleman state whether it is the fact that the other great European Powers—namely, Germany, Austria, and Italy—have declined to put this pressure on the Porte, and, if so, why have they been declined?

*MR. SPEAKER said that notice had better be given of the Question.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said, he would ask the question on another day.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been drawn to the statement in the *Daily Telegraph* of the 16th instant from Vienna, that, whilst three months ago some 150 Armenians, falsely accused of revolutionary conspiracies, were liberated from the prison at Amassia, Bekir Pasha, the Governor, has found means, under various pretexts, to re-arrest the majority of the discharged persons, and place them again in insanitary cells, subjecting them to tortures; and whether Her Majesty's Government, if these particulars prove true, will insist on the dismissal of Bekir Pasha?

SIR EDWARD GREY: Bekir Pasha, Mutexarif of Amassia, was appointed last spring in place of an official who was removed by the Turkish Government in consequence of the number of arbitrary arrests he had made. In November last it was reported that most of the political prisoners had been released. The report referred to by the hon. Member will be sent to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople for inquiry.

OCEAN DERELICTS.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether he is aware that Captain M'Kinstry, R.M.S., of the White Star steamship *Adriatic*, reported on the 15th instant that on Friday the 22nd ultimo, in latitude 51·10 N., longitude 16·25 W., he passed a derelict barque named *Lyndsay*, with all rigging standing, and fore and main lower topsail set, that had drifted west by north over 100 miles from where she had been seen four days previously, as reported by the steamship *Catalonia*; and since that report, the White Star steamship *Teutonic*, on the 19th instant, reported her owners' offices in Liverpool that on the 1st March, at 1.48 p.m., in latitude 50·28 N., longitude 21·40 W., she passed a derelict Norwegian barque *Birgitte*, waterlogged, not far from the coast of Ireland, in the direct track of Transatlantic steamers; and whether, under these circumstances of great peril to British commerce and passenger traffic, he will take immediate steps to discover these derelicts?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The circumstances of the reports of these vessels are not such as to put them into the category of those rare cases which have caused the Admiralty, from time to time, to consent to the diversion of a man-of-war from her other duties, for the purpose of searching for a derelict. There is no evidence to show that these vessels (which have not been reported since the dates named, except that the *Lyndsay* was seen again the next day, the 23rd) have not followed the usual course and foundered after floating for some days; while the presence of a large quantity of floating wood not far from where the *Lyndsay* was last seen, seems especially to point to this conclusion in her case.

ICELAND FISHERIES.

MR. J. G. WEIR: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he is aware that the fishing population of Iceland have, for some time past, suffered great loss through the depredations of British steam trawlers; and whether any representations upon the subject have been received from the Danish Government?

SIR EDWARD GREY: A representation was received from the Danish Minister in 1893 asking that British vessels should be warned not to fish in the territorial waters of Iceland. A notice was issued accordingly by the Board of Trade in April of that year.

FOUR COURTS OFFICERS.

Mr. SWIFT MacNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Officers of the Four Courts, Dublin, constitute practically the only branch of the Civil Service in Ireland which is not affected by Rule 65, although they are not entitled to a retiring pension under the Superannuation Acts, and are therefore *primâ facie* subject to the Rule; whether there are a number of the principal officers who are considerably beyond the age limit prescribed by the Order in Council; and whether, in these circumstances, he will advise the Lord Chancellor of Ireland to consider the propriety of enforcing the application of the Order in Council in such cases without any further delay.

*Sir JOHN HIBBERT: The question whether the Order in Council of August 15, 1890, was applicable to the staff of the Supreme Court, Ireland, was considered in February 1892, by the then Lord Chancellor and Judges of the Supreme Court, who gave their opinion in the negative. There is no official information as to the ages of the principal Officers of the Supreme Court. The Government has under consideration the extension of such provisions of the Order in Council as are applicable, to the establishments of the Departments of the Supreme Courts in the three Kingdoms.

A RACING DISPUTE IN MADRAS.

Mr. W. S. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he is aware that serious charges have been made in the public Press of Madras against Captain Holmes, one of the aides-de-camp to the Governor of Madras, to the effect that he had acted unfairly in the matter of a horse race; that, in consequence, an inquiry was made by the stewards of the Western India Turf Club, who have published their decision, stating that the jockey who acted with Captain Holmes was unfit to hold a trainer's licence, which was accordingly revoked, and that Captain Holmes himself had shown an undoubted desire to conceal the fact of the trial of his horse with another both before and after the race, and that it was his duty to have ascertained beyond all possible doubt that the owner of the other horse was made aware of it, a duty which he neglected to perform; and, is Captain Holmes still aide-de-camp to the Governor?

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL: The Secretary of State has no information on the subject, but has no doubt that if the facts are as stated they will be inquired into by the authorities in India, and the necessary action taken.

ALLOTMENT LAND IN SURREY AND KENT.

Mr. S. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that in the counties of Surrey and Kent some of the parish councils established under the 1894 Act have purchased land for small allotments at sums varying from £8 to £9 per acre, the price of such land previously only being at the rate of from 30s. to 35s. per acre; and, if he is not in possession of this information, will he make inquiry into the matter, and lay a Report thereon upon the Table of the House?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I have no information on this subject, and I do not know what parishes are referred to. I may, however, point out to my hon. Friend that a parish council is not empowered by the Local Government Act, 1894, to purchase land for allotments. The Act only enables them to hire it.

WATER SUPPLY AND FIRE.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the want of a proper supply of water at a serious fire which occurred in Gauden Road, Clapham, at 2 A.M. yesterday (Wednesday); and will he order an inquiry into the matter for the purpose of protecting life and property?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The accounts I have read of this fire do not allege any failure of water. I have no authority to direct inquiry otherwise than on the application of twenty ratepayers.

JOURNAL OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

Mr. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he is aware that reports of the proceedings of Chambers of Commerce are regularly published by the Board of Trade in the *Board of Trade Journal*; whether he will consider the desirability of publishing in the same way reports of the proceedings of Chambers of Agriculture and Farmers' Clubs in the *Journal of the Board of Agriculture*; and if this journal can be sent to all Members who apply for it?

*Mr. HERBERT GARDNER: I believe the hon. Member correctly states the practice adopted in the case of the *Board of Trade Journal*, and I shall be glad to consider whether a similar arrangement could be adopted in the case of *The Journal of the Board of Agriculture.* I would say, however, that the available space is more limited in the latter case, and it could not be greatly extended without an increase of its price, which I am anxious to keep as low as possible. I should be pleased to place the name of any Member of Parliament on the list of those to whom the *Journal* is sent gratuitously on receipt of an intimation of the desire to receive it.

EDINBURGH TELEGRAPHISTS.

Mr. H. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether a memorial, signed by 200 telegraphists in Edinburgh, and complaining that they were deprived of their statutory holidays, was received at the General Post Office last July; if it has been received, why no notice has been taken of it; and when the memorialists may expect a reply?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: The memorial referred to has been received, and has been duly considered. It raises questions which affect a large number of other offices, and has therefore taken a considerable time to investigate. What I understand the memorialists to ask is that an exception may be made in their favour to the general rule of the service, which prescribes that only work done within the 24 hours in which the Bank Holiday falls can be paid for at the extra Bank Holiday rate. I am considering how far this rule can be modified in favour of the staff, not at Edinburgh only, but throughout the kingdom.

INCOME TAX IN NEW ZEALAND.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he is aware that the New Zealand Government claim the payment of income tax by temporary residents in that Colony on their whole incomes derived from Consols, railway and other stocks in England, which are also taxed in this country in the ordinary way; and, whether there is any redress?

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am not aware that the facts are as stated by the hon. Member. No complaints on the matter have reached the Colonial Office.

THE BELFAST GUARDIANS.

Mr. E. F. VESEY KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to a letter from Mr. David Mitchell, a Guardian of the Belfast Union, to the Local Government Board stating that the Guardians had accepted 300 mattresses 25 per cent. less than the contract weight, and proportionately less in value, and had paid the full contract price for them. What course is usually pursued by the Board when goods greatly inferior to sample are knowingly accepted by Guardians and paid for at the full price: and, what course the Board proposes to adopt in this case?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board received the communication referred to in the question. The Belfast Guardians have stated, that owing to a difficulty in manufacturing the original sample mattress, they permitted a slight deviation therefrom, and that the mattresses have been received and paid for. The Local Government Board have informed the Guardians that they consider their action in the matter irregular, and that they will draw the Auditor's attention to the transaction. The Board cannot compel the Guardians to adhere to the terms of their contract; but, if the Auditor is of opinion that the ratepayers have suffered loss owing to the proceedings, he can surcharge the Guardians with the amount, or part of the amount, paid for the mattresses.

FOREIGN BOUNTIES.

Sir RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he will be good enough to lay upon the Table of the House, obtaining (if necessary) the required information from the Foreign or Colonial Office, a Parliamentary Paper setting out in detail an account of any systems of bounty, direct or indirect, now offered, either by any Foreign Government or by any British Colony, to stimulate the export to Great Britain and Ireland of any agricultural produce, and stating, so far as information can be obtained, the quantities and values of any such articles of agricultural produce so protected and imported into the United Kingdom during the past year, or any recent series of years?

Mr. BRYCE: Information as to bounties on agricultural produce is being obtained through the Foreign and Colonial Offices, and the information will, in some form or other, be communicated to this House.

Sir R. PAGET: Will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to inform the House how soon he expects the information to be ready?

Mr. BRYCE: It will take some little time to get the information, but I hope it will be ready on no very distant date.

THE IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

Dr. KENNY (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether he can state, with some degree of definiteness, when he will be able to announce his decision on the tenders of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company for the accelerated mail service between Kingstown and Holyhead?

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: I am still in negotiation with the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, and am awaiting a further communication. I am unable to fix a date for making a definite announcement.

Dr. KENNY: Is it not the fact that the Steam Packet Company are awaiting a communication from the right hon. Gentleman?

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: No, Sir, I am now awaiting a reply to a letter which I sent yesterday.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: On behalf of the hon. Member for West Cavan (Mr. Vesey Knox) I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether he will endeavour, in connection with some proposed changes in the Time Table of the Midland Great Western Railway, to arrange for a connection between the limited mail service from Dublin passing Inny Junction, and Cavan, and Killeshandra, whereby the mails could be much accelerated; and, whether he can say what would be the cost of transmitting mails to Dublin by the goods train leaving Cavan by the Midland line at 9.30 p.m.?

*Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: The Day Mail now arrives at Cavan at 11.20 a.m., and it would not arrive until 12.36 p.m. if sent via Inny Junction. I understand that the Midland Great Western Railway Company do not contemplate any alteration at present in their train service to Cavan. As regards Killeshandra, the Day Mail now arrives at 2.19 p.m., and includes letters from Belfast, Scotland, &c., as well as from Dublin. A Day Mail, from Dublin, arriving at 12.47 p.m., might be afforded, but as such a mail would not include a considerable number of the letters arriving in the present mail, it is doubtful whether the arrangement is desirable. Further enquiry, however, shall be made on this point. The additional expenditure involved in forwarding a mail to Dublin, from Cavan, by the Midland Goods Train at night, would not be very large, but the change would be attended with some disadvantage, and the question, therefore, requires fuller consideration. I will communicate further with the hon. Member when the necessary enquiries have been completed.

THE TELEPHONE SERVICE COMMITTEE.

Mr. A. C. MORTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether Municipal and County Authorities will be allowed to tender evidence before the Select Committee on Telephone Service; and, if so, will he say what arrangements have been or will be made to carry out that object?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: I have made arrangements with the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow in regard to evidence which is to be tendered on behalf of the Scottish

Corporations. I have also made arrangements with regard to the London County Council and with regard to Municipal Corporations. Any other local authorities not thus represented which desire to give evidence should communicate with me on the subject.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can now name the day on which he will announce the manner in which he intends to include the Christian Brothers in the grant for primary education?

MR. J. MORLEY was afraid he must give the same answer as he had given previously. There was not the slightest chance until after Easter, and possibly considerably after.

THE BALLINA UNION, MAYO.

MR. R. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he is aware that great distress prevails in the Letterbrick Electoral Division of the Ballina Union; that 57 families, comprising 256 persons, have petitioned the Ballina Board of Guardians for relief works; and that no works have yet been opened in that district; and what steps he proposes to take in order to relieve those poor people?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Inspector of the Local Government Board visited this division yesterday, and carefully inquired into the condition of the people. He reports that, as a rule, the people are comfortably circumstanced, their lands and grazing are very good, and that they have both cattle and sheep. There are some cases of chronic poverty in the division, but there are only five cases of persons receiving out-door relief, of whom two are small landholders. Under all the circumstances there seems to be no necessity at present for the establishment of relief works within this district.

CYPRUS.

MR. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer why, as the Turkish loan of five millions issued in 1855, the interest on which was guaranteed by this country and France, was made a first charge upon the Egyptian tribute, subsequent Turkish loans have been issued the interest on which has been made a charge on that tribute, which appear to have a prior claim upon it; whether £1,177,000 of the bonds of the loan have been redeemed, and consequently the outstanding liability has been reduced to £3,823,000; whether, of these outstanding bonds £2,695,000 have been drawn for redemption, but have not been redeemed, and whether powers were taken when the loan was issued to pay off the whole loan at any time; what portion of the total interest due on the amount of the loan outstanding, amounting to £152,120 per annum, is paid out of the Cyprus tribute, and from what sources the excess over that tribute is provided; whether he is aware that 2½ per cent. Consols are now quoted at 102¼, and that consequently a British guarantee enables money to be borrowed at 2½ per cent.; and whether, in view of the capacity of Cyprus to pay tribute and costs of her administration having been overestimated to the serious loss of the British taxpayer, he can convey to the House any hope that the loan will be converted into 2½ per cent. securities, and that at the same time negotiations with Turkey will be commenced urging on that country, in consideration of Great Britain and France having to meet their guarantee owing to its default, to reduce the tribute paid by Cyprus by the amount saved by the conversion?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby) said the hon. Gentleman had developed a rather elaborate financial scheme which he was afraid he could hardly criticise in answer to a question. The truth was that there were so many interests involved that he was afraid he could not see his way to an arrangement.

MR. LABOUCHERE asked whether, if the loan might be paid off at any time, it might not be paid off without the consent of the bondholders.

SIR W. HARCOURT would rather not express an opinion on the subject.

LAND TAX.

MR. A. F. JEFFREYS: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, what is the amount of the Land Tax now collected in England and Wales; who are the collectors of this tax; and how are they paid?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The amount of land tax now collected in England and Wales is about £1,000,000; the collectors are local officers appointed by the local Commissioners of Land Tax. Their remuneration is fixed by the Act 55 and 56 Vic. cap. 25, and 54 and 55 Vic., cap 13.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) asked if the right hon. Gentleman was aware that in a great number of country parishes it was the rule for the collectors, with the assent of the Land Tax Commissioners, to raise, not only the proper amount of the tax, but about 10 per cent. besides, and receive that 10 per cent. as payment for collection?

SIR W. HARCOURT said, the matter had been regulated for the last two or three years by Act of Parliament, and he was not aware of any such arrangement as the hon. Gentleman mentioned.

MR. WEIR inquired whether the collectors were paid by salary or by Commission?

SIR W. HARCOURT said that formerly the payment was by poundage, but a new system had been established.

MR. HANBURY asked if there was any authority for a collector collecting more than the fixed quota of land tax.

SIR W. HARCOURT said he should say that no one was entitled to collect more than the proper amount.

H.M.S. "HORNET."

MR. E. T. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, if it is true that the piston rods of H.M.S. *Hornet* have broken; and whether it is the fact that the maker's original design and arrangements of these pistons were refused by the Admiralty, and altered to suit their views, and, this being the cause of the breaking, they are now being fitted according to the maker's original design; if so, do the Admiralty pay for the alterations?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The reply to both parts of the question is in the affirmative.

CONCILIATION (TRADE DISPUTES) BILL.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in reference to the Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill, introduced by the Government, which was down amongst the Orders of the Day, whether, as the Government had blocked the other Bills dealing with the same subject, facilities would be given for the consideration of all those Conciliation Bills.

MR. BRYCE: I stated last night, in reply to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for London University, that I was quite willing to allow the Second Reading of that Bill as soon as the Government Bill was read a second time, and that they should go together to the same Grand Committee. I have no objection at all to the third Bill.

MR. BARTLEY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would give facilities for the consideration of the Bill at reasonable hours?

MR. BRYCE: I think I have answered that question. I gave a promise the other day to assent to the Second Reading of the Bill, as a matter of course, if the Government Bill got its Second Reading.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ESTABLISHED CHURCH (WALES) BILL.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.), who on rising to move the Second Reading of the Established Church (Wales) Bill was received with loud cheers, said: Mr. Speaker, the time has now come when, in accordance with our ordinary practice, the great issues of principle which are raised by this measure can be appropriately discussed, and it is my duty, in fulfilment of the promise I have made more than once, to state, on behalf of the Government, the grounds of policy which have led to its introduction. Sir, the questions involved in a proposal of this kind must, under all circumstances, be questions of the utmost delicacy and gravity. But in the present case the difficulty of dealing with them is greatly enhanced by the extreme and, at the same time, the perfectly intelligible sensitiveness of feeling which this controversy with respect to the Welsh Church has aroused, both upon the one side and upon the other. On the one hand, we have the overwhelming majority of the representatives of Wales, who see in this measure the means, long delayed, ardently, and I think I may say passionately, desired by the vast bulk of their people for the removal of what they conceive to be a grievous and glaring injustice. On the other hand, we are confronted by those who look upon this Bill as nothing better and nothing worthier than a veiled attack upon the Church of England, promoted, as they tell us, upon false pretences and for sordid reasons, and fraught, if it should ever succeed in passing into law, with injurious, and even disastrous consequences, as well to the spiritual as to the temporal interests of the Church. Sir, no wonder that in an atmosphere charged with these currents of feeling, the right hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) the other day, lamenting, as he said, that we seemed to be divided from one another by a distance as great as that which separates the poles, should almost have despaired of even a common meeting ground between us for argument. For my part, Sir, I desire, and I am certain that all who are responsible for the conduct of this Bill desire, to avoid, as far as we can, the importation into the discussion of unnecessary heat. I shall endeavour, to the best of my ability, to do so, and I trust that I may appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite, who feel so strongly and so sincerely upon the subject, at any rate to give me a forbearing and an indulgent hearing, while I on my side will ask from them in advance forgiveness if unwittingly, by any phrase or argument of mine, I give offence to a sentiment which, whether I share it or not, I at any rate understand and respect. Now, Sir, the object of this Bill is to terminate the legal Establishment of the Church of England in Wales. That is its central and its essential provision. Everything else in it is subsidiary to that main and governing purpose. I think, therefore, before I come to deal with the special circumstances of the particular case of Wales, it may be useful, even at the risk of repeating facts which are familiar to the House, if I ask and if I attempt to answer the question, in what does Establishment by law of the Church consist? Sir, as we are all aware, the relations between the Church and the State in this country are very different at the present time from what they were in the earlier stages of our constitutional history. In those days, and down to a time which is comparatively recent, the Church and State were co-extensive in area. They were different aspects, or to speak more accurately, different organisations, of one and the same society. No man could be a citizen unless he was a Churchman. Heresy was a crime punishable by law, and dissent in those who avowed it exposed them to every kind of civil and political disability. That was Establishment in the strict and full sense of the term. As we know, by the operation of forces with which the student of history is familiar, at first in the guise of toleration, then in the more formidable shape of a demand for religious liberty, that complete and logical system of Establishment was slowly undermined; and it is instructive to observe, and not at all irrelevant to the question now before the House, that at every stage and every step of that process champions of Church Establishment resisted the change on the ground, for which, in my judgment at any rate, there was a much greater logical foundation in those days than there is for the corresponding argument to-day—that if you once admitted to civil and political rights, to a full share in the making and administration of the law, men of all religions and of no religion, the national profession of religion embodied in the Established Church would cease to have any meaning or reality. We listen to the same arguments to-day; but they are arguments advanced in the defence of what, though it is still, as I shall show, a very formidable framework of legal protection, is after all only a meagre and attenuated remnant of the Establishment of the past. For what is the Establishment of the Church by law to-day? In the first place it means the incorporation of the law of the Church into the law of the land. It means that the Courts of the Church in ecclesiastical matters have a coercive jurisdiction, which, in the last resort, the civil power will enforce. It means that the Bishops of the Church exercise legislative functions in the

House of Lords. It means that the legislature of the Church, Convocation, is summoned by the Crown and is constituted according to law, and that without the license of the Crown it has no power to make any enactment which has any binding effect. It means that the doctrines and the ceremonies of the Church, whatever other sanction or authority they may have, have also the statutory authority of Acts of Parliament behind them. As to endowment, it means that a large number, a very considerable proportion of the benefices of the Church, are at the disposal of persons who for the time being hold important offices of State; and as to that which is in Wales, at any rate, the main source of the revenue of the Church, the tithes, it means, in contradistinction to every other form of religious endowment possessed by other religious sects, that in the last resort the machinery of the law and the arm of the law will be brought into operation to enforce them. Sir, if that be so—and I do not think I have stated anything that will be controverted—the Established Church has privileges and obligations to which no other religious denomination in this country is entitled or subject, and which have this common characteristic, whether they spring from the common law, or whether they are derived from statute—that they were conferred and are maintained by the State. I have dwelt upon these facts, familiar as they undoubtedly are, because I wish at the outset of the argument to dispose of two familiar fallacies. In the first place, I say, the statements I have made show conclusively and bring out in the clearest possible light a distinction which is obvious enough, that if the Church is a spiritual body, which is one, which is identical, which is continuous, and which does not change, the Church is also a State establishment, which is subject, as to all its forms and all its laws, to the shifting currents of public opinion, which is at one time protected by Parliament to a certain extent, and which at another time is protected by Parliament within much narrower and more contracted limits. There can be, in my judgment, no delusion more injurious to the true interests of the Church, or more fatal to a true understanding of our Constitution, than to confuse these things, which are separate in their origin, separate in their purpose, and have absolutely no necessary connection between each other. But, Sir, there is a second and an equally fallacious argument which is often introduced into these discussions, and which, I think, is shown to be equally untrue by the short summary with which I have troubled the House, and that is, that the State, by altering the condition of establishment, or by getting rid of the establishment altogether, is in some way or other making a formal repudiation on the part of the nation of its religious character. Sir, upon that point I will not use any language of my own, because I am glad to be able to appeal to a much higher authority, one of weight and eminence, who will be recognised by hon. Gentlemen opposite; one of our principal opponents in this controversy, one of the ablest and most distinguished lawyers this country has produced—the Earl of Selborne. I quote the words which he used in this House on March 22, 1869, upon the Second Reading of the Bill for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Irish Church. Sir Roundell Palmer, as he then was, used these remarkable expressions:—

> "I cannot agree with those who say that the severance of the political relations of the Church with the State is, and necessarily must be, an abnegation of national Christianity or an act of national apostasy. It appears to me that such a view is founded upon an entirely false notion of the vocation of Civil Government and the nature of national religion. . . . National religion is not any profession embodied in laws or forms and ceremonies made by those at the head of the Government, but it is in the religion of the people who constitute the nation. . . . Therefore we must approach the question of any political privileges given to the Church by considering whether the privilege is for the public good."

That, Sir, is the test laid down by that high authority, which I propose to apply to the case of Disestablishment in Wales. Before I proceed to the particular facts of the case I must clear away another source of difficulty—I mean that class of questions sometimes raised as to the right of the State to interfere with the Establishment or Endowments of the National Church. I assert that from the earliest times in this country the State has claimed and exercised a controlling voice in the civil government and regulation of the endowments and privileges of the National Church. I hold very strongly that it is an historical fallacy to represent the Church of England as ever having been a mere offshoot and dependency of the Church of Rome. I think the whole of our mediæval history shows, first of all, that our kings, then our Parliaments, as soon as they acquired a dominant position, kept a tight grip of the government of the Church, refused to allow the intrusion of any foreign Power or any outside ecclesiastical authority in the regulation of our National Church, and, as you see in the Constitutions of Clarendon, the Statute of Provisors, and a hundred other Acts of Parliament, the State in this country has insisted that the position of the Church, its status, privileges, and endowments should be kept constitutionally within the control of the supreme authority of the Crown and Parliament. We are often referred on this question to the legislation of the Reformation. It follows from what I have already said, that I am not one of those who think, as used to be currently assumed, that the legislation of Henry VIII. transferred the privileges and endowments of a National Establishment from the Church of Rome to the Church of England. I believe that view rests upon imperfect historical information. I am quite prepared to admit what I believe the best authorities of history now assert, that there has been amidst all these changes and developments a substantial identity and continuity of existence in our National Church from earliest history down to the present time. But that does not in any degree affect the importance of the legislation to which I am referring. What was that legislation? It was the assertion of a claim upon the part of the Crown and Parliament first of all to establish and define the royal supremacy over the Church; next to confine the Church, even in purely ecclesiastical matters, as its final Court of Appeal, to a Court of secular Judges appointed by the Crown; to change the doctrines, modify the ceremonies, taught and practised by the Church; at one moment to prohibit and at another moment to permit, and then prohibit again, such an institution as the marriage of the clergy. I defy anyone who has studied with an impartial mind the legislation for the 40 years between 1530 and 1570, who has followed the course of the revolution in the reign of Henry VIII., the counter revolution in the reign of Queen Mary, the restoration of the pre-existing state of things in the reign of Elizabeth — I defy any fair-minded man acquainted with that history to dispute the proposition that Parliament did at that time assert and exercise the right to prescribe the conditions of tenure upon which every ecclesiastical benefice of this country was to be held. I am not saying that in many respects the time of the Parliament at that period was usefully employed. Many of these Statutes we can only read with amazement and consternation that a body of laymen should have deemed themselves qualified to deal with that subject-matter. But this is the price which the National Church pays for the so-called privileges of Establishment. It is for them to consider whether the privileges and disabilities which result from that status are worth the price which, as history shows, they have always had to pay, and which they will always have to pay for that state of things. The result is this: the Church of England here and in Wales at the present moment is a Church which is absolutely without either judicial or legislative autonomy. It is a Church as to the interpretation of whose formularies, not merely in matters affecting property, but in matters affecting ecclesiastical doctrine, in the last resort the appeal is to a secular Court. It is a Church which is impotent to alter a single form or ceremony or line of its doctrines or service without first of all obtaining the licence of the Crown, which may be given upon the advice of a Minister who is not even a Christian at all, and without further obtaining the assent of a Parliament which is open to men of all creeds and of no creed. I am not going to enter into the question—which is not relevant to my argument—whether or not that is a desirable state of things in the interest of the Church, though I will venture to protest respectfully, but, at the same time, very strongly, against some language which was used by the right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol upon the First Reading of this Bill. He quoted a passage in a speech of mine somewhere in the country in which I had ventured to express the opinion that the Church might be a better Church in Wales, and would be better and more capable of discharging, with general acceptance and real effect, its spiritual mission, if relieved from the privileges and disabilities of Establishment. The right hon. Baronet, temperate and fair-minded controversialist as he usually is, has not found any better terms in which to describe that language of mine than that of political cant. Are we to assume that it is impossible for any man, however highly and strongly he may value the teachings and traditions of the Church of England, honestly and sincerely to entertain the opinion that these series of chains and fetters, which I have been describing, are not a help but a hindrance to her in the discharge of her mission? It augurs very badly for the conduct of this controversy if motives of that kind are to be so rashly and lightly imputed. It follows, from what I have said, that it is impossible to say that, in regard to such an Establishment as I have described, Parliament has not now the same right, which she claimed and exercised a hundred times in the past, to deal with its civil privileges and pecuniary endowments on grounds of public policy and in accordance with its own will and discretion. It is not necessary to labour that point. We have placed on the Statute Book within the lifetime of the present generation, and within the memory of most of those whom I have the honour of addressing, in the Irish Church Act, the most complete assertion which this or any other Legislature has ever made of its power to do as it pleases with the status of an Established Church, and to divert the endowments of such a Church, if it likes, to purely secular uses. There may still be differences of opinion as to the policy of that Act, and I believe there are abundant grounds for asserting that there are differences of time and circumstances, and of local conditions, between the case of England and Wales. But all that is not the point. Morality does not change its colour when it crosses St. George's Channel. That which Parliament assented to in the measure for the Second Reading of which, I believe, Lord Salisbury gave his vote in the House of Lords in 1869—a measure which now, at any rate, stands upon the Statute Book with the assent of the Queen, Lords, and Commons, has never been in any way repealed; and that measure may surely be pointed to as a sufficient justification and precedent when we are assailed with these charges of sacrilege and plunder. Having, I hope, cleared the ground of these preliminary objections, I now proceed to consider the special case of Wales. It follows from what I have said, that the existing Establishment, both in England and in Wales, represents the remnants of far larger privileges and powers which she once possessed. It is equally true that the State has always claimed the right to deal, on grounds of policy, with this Establishment; and it is further true that this Bill, whether it be politic or impolitic, raises no new question, either of constitutional practice or of the limits of what I may call the moral competence and the moral authority of Parliament. What is the case of Wales? What is the Establishment in Wales? Is it a National Church in the sense of the definition that I have read from Lord Selborne? Is it the Church of the nation? Is it, by its history and by its present position and prospects, the natural organ and vehicle of the religious sentiments either of the whole or of any considerable majority of the Welsh people? Is its ascendency and position of privilege among the other religious sects of the country admitted or acquiesced in by the bulk of the Welsh people? I am aware that we are told that we have no right in this case to separate Wales from the rest of England. From the formal and technical point of view, it is perfectly true, as has been said, that these four Welsh dioceses are parts of the Province of Canterbury. The argument, I understand, is that, however strong may be the case in these four dioceses for Disestablishment and Disendowment, even though it went to the point that there was not one single Welshman who was a member of the Established Church, yet, inasmuch as you cannot separate dioceses from the province of which they form part, you must not treat Wales separately, but must take the question as affecting England as a whole.

To that I entirely demur. The President of the Board of Trade, in his speech on the First Reading of the Bill, explained, as it seemed to me with admirable force and cogency, what we mean when we speak of Wales, not as a mere geographical expressson, but as the home of a people. I know this is called Separatism. In the opinion of some hon. Gentlemen opposite, it is Separatism to recognise that there are such things as separate nationalities the combination of which goes to form the United Kingdom of which we are all a part. We take a different view. We believe that the best way of recognising and consolidating the true union of the kingdom as a whole is to recognise, and within the limits of Imperial unity to defer to, those separate national sentiments which have their root in the history of the past and which form the salt of the life of our local communities. In that sense I assert—the Government assert—that the Welsh people are a nation. Whether you look to race, language, literature, to their temperament and genius, to their national memories and traditions, there is as clear a case for maintaining the distinctively national and corporate individuality of the people of Wales as of the people of England, Scotland or Ireland. If you look at the ecclesiastical history of Wales, the case is still stronger. Why? The Welsh Church is sometimes described, and, in my opinion, justly described, if you have regard to its later history, as an alien Church, because just as a thing that is imported from abroad may become acclimatised, and in the truest sense, national, so a thing which is indigenous, if it is distorted and adulterated may become in the truest sense alien. What is the origin of the Welsh Church? Here I am sure I shall have the entire assent of hon. Gentlemen opposite. The Welsh Church, as they are fond of telling us, existed before the English Church existed. It was founded before the Mission of Augustine to the Saxons. There is a tradition in Wales—I do not know whether it is still alive, but it used to be very vivid — that there was a time in the golden past when the See of St. Davids was a Metropolitan See. I do not believe that the Welsh people have ever lost the sense that, instead of borrowing their religion from England, and instead of being dependent upon a mission from here for the introduction of Christianity into their country, it was in the true sense of the word a spontaneous and a native growth. The case of Wales is the case of a Church which in its origin and inception was national, which was separate entirely from the Church of England, but which by incorporation into the Anglican Church, and by the subordination through long centuries of its interests and its needs to the interests and needs of England, has become denationalised. Is that statement true, or is it not? It is a fact which rests upon indisputable authority that certainly from the time of Henry II., onwards, down to the Tudor and Stuart period, the Welsh Church was treated by our Norman and English Kings as an instrument for the Government of the Welsh people. They appointed Norman Bishops, who did not understand the language, who were hostile to the temperament and to the sentiment of the nation. And an eminent authority declares that during these centuries the leading clergy in Wales were a kind of ecclesiastical police sent by the Kings and Parliaments of England to keep watch and ward over an unruly race. There is a very remarkable circumstance in that connection which may perhaps not be familiar to all hon. Gentlemen, and that is an incident which occurred, I think, in the reign of Henry II. or King John, when Giraldus Cambrensis, an eminent Welsh writer and historian of that time, was elected by the Chapter to the See of St. Davids. The King of England disapproved of it, and insisted on the Chapter taking a nominee of his own. Giraldus, who was a man of considerable enterprise, went on a pilgrimage to Rome, in order that he might solicit the intervention of the Pope, and obtain a favourable recognition of his claim as against the Royal nominee. He took with him a petition from the Princes of Wales, which is very interesting and so relevant to the question which the House is now discussing that I will trouble them with one or two citations from it. This is the petition of the Welsh Princes as far back as the end of the twelfth century, to Pope Innocent III., and what they say is this :—

> "Be it known to your fatherly goodness the great sufferings and the danger of losing souls that have fallen upon the Church in Wales since by kingly oppression, and not by the authority of the Bishop of Rome, she became subjected to the authority of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury."

Now the right hon. Baronet opposite told us the other day that it was in the 18th century that the State and the King by this course of neglect and abuse lost the hold which the Welsh Church had previously possessed upon the affections of the Welsh people. Let me read the description by the Welsh Princes of the state of things in the 12th century :—

> "The Archbishop of Canterbury sends us English Bishops, ignorant of the manners and language of the land, who cannot preach the word of God to the people, nor receive their confessions but through interpreters. And since these Bishops that are sent to us from England do not love us or our land, they do not seek the good of our souls; their ambition is to rule over us and not to seek our benefit, and on this account they do not but very rarely fulfil the duties of their office among us. And whatever they can take from us by just means or unjust—" [that sounds like a description of the Irish Church]—" is carried away by them into England and squandered in the monasteries that are given to them by the King of England. And like the Parthians who shoot backwards from afar as they retreat, so do they from England excommunicate us as often as they are ordered so to do."

That is the description given by the Welsh Princes themselves, on the authority of Giraldus, of the state of things which prevailed in the twelfth century; and I assert that, with rare intervals, that represents fairly the history of the Welsh Church and of its treatment by England during the period of six centuries. There were times, I agree, in the reigns of the Tudor Kings, and even in the reigns of the Stuart Kings, when a better state of things prevailed, but, upon the whole, I do not believe I am exaggerating when I say that from the beginning until a very recent time the Welsh Church has been treated as a kind of annexe of the Church of England—a convenience for the disposal of offices and benefices among persons who have no claims upon the Welsh people, who did not understand their language, and who are out of sympathy with them and their temperament. And where that state of things has prevailed, just as it prevailed in the case of Ireland, you cannot wonder that the Church has ceased to have any hold on the real affections of the people. I do not wish to dwell too long on merely historical matters, although until you realise the history of the question it is impossible to understand fully the feelings of the Welsh people. I pass now to say one or two words with respect to the growth of Welsh dissent in the 18th century. The Welsh people, in spite of all the abuses to which I have referred, were a people who had a natural affection for their national form of religion. The Reformation, it is said, took but slight hold on them, and we know that Puritanism never got any great lodgment in Wales. At the beginning of the 18th century, and after the Revolution, there are said to have been not more than 100 Dissenting congregations in Wales. Very shortly after the beginning of the 19th century there were nearly 1,000 Dissenting congregations in Wales. What was the cause of this change? The cause of the change was this—that there sprang up in the Welsh Church, by way of protest against its lukewarmness, its rigidity, and its narrow Anglican character, a body of men whose names are cherished in Wales—men like Griffith Jones, Rowlands, and others, all of whom were members of the Church of England, all of whom started within the bosom of the Church their great work of reformation—[An hon. MEMBER: "And stayed there."]—and some of whom, I agree, died in the religion of the Church, but who were the founders—against their will and in defiance, I will not say of their convictions, but certainly of their desires and hopes—the reluctant and unwilling founders of Welsh Nonconformity. What became of these men? They were driven away, and what was their crime? These men, who introduced education as well as religious faith among the great mass of the population in Wales, had committed the unpardonable enormity of preaching the Gospel in unconsecrated places—in the streets, upon the hillsides, and even in Nonconformist chapels. The Bishops of that day, supported, as they appear to have been, by the opinion and the sympathy of the great body of their clergy, declined to ordain men who were guilty of practices such as these, with the result that these apostles, as they may truly be called, of the revival of Welsh religion were driven out of the so-called national Church of their country, taking with them whatever was real, vital, and progressive within that Church. That is the history of the foundation of Welsh Nonconformity. An hon. Gentleman thought it expedient to remind me just now that some of these men died in the Church. So they did, and that is a proof of how eagerly they tried to reconcile the claims which the Church had upon their allegiance and loyalty with what they conceived to be the still higher and still stronger claims of their religious faith. It was not until 1811—until this movement had been going on for nearly 70 years—that, finally, the the Bishops absolutely refusing to ordain fresh ministers for their work, these men were compelled to separate from the Church and found the sect of Calvinistic Methodists. That sect was founded as a separate body in 1811. In 1816 it already numbered some 900 congregations. At the present day it contributes a considerable proportion of the 4,000 and more chapels belonging to the different dissenting communities. Let me read one more passage on this question. It is from the well-known work of an ardent Churchman, entitled—

> "A Prize Essay on the Causes which have produced Dissent in Wales from the Established Church,"

by Arthur James Johnes, published in 1831. I quote from p. 25 of the first edition:—

> "On putting to a gentleman, upon whose accuracy I can rely, the following question—'What proportion of the collective income of the Welsh Church is held by Englishmen?' I received the following answer:—'Four bishoprics'—I suppose that is all there are—'a great portion of the deaneries, prebends, and sinecure rectories, and many, if not most, of the canonries. During the reign of the Houses of Tudor and Stuart several Welshmen were mitred; but not one since the accession of the House of Brunswick. The consequence was that the prelates brought into their respective dioceses their sons, nephews, and cousins to the ninth degree of consanguinity; the next consequence was a change of service (on the borders) from Welsh to English; and a third and important consequence was the desertion of the Church. Conventicles were erected in every direction.'"

That is the opinion of a friend of the Church as late as 1831. The right hon. baronet, the Member for Bristol, took me to task with some severity for having said that the National Church in Wales was associated in the minds of the people with injurious and humiliating memories. Does not the story, the bare outline of which I have given, amply justify that statement? Here is a Church which I agree in its origin was of native and spontaneous growth, but which for centuries was used, with rare and brief intervals, not merely by the State—the blame must not all be thrown on the State—but by the Church of England as a dependency of its own. It may be said this is ancient history. It is not so very ancient after all; but even if it were, that does not affect the question. There is no truth more legible on the page of history than this, that for institutions, as for individuals, there are opportunities and chances which, if they are neglected and abused, never recur. There are times of probation, which, if they have once expired, cannot be renewed or enlarged; and, if you want to find the secret of the comparative weakness of the Anglican Church in Wales, if you want to understand why it is that 31 out of 34 of her representatives have come to this House pledged to have that Church disestablished and disendowed, you have only to look at the history, the mean and ignominious features of which it has been my painful duty to bring before the House. You find there the reason and justification for it. I now pass for a moment to the existing state of things. I do not deny—no fair-minded man would deny, nor is it to our interest to do so—that since 1831, when the passage I have quoted was written, there has been a large and a most beneficial change in the spirit and temper of the Anglican Church in Wales. The State, on the one hand, has appointed Bishops, deans, and canons who knew the language and understood the people, and the Church, animated by a new spirit, has developed a beneficent spiritual activity in many parts of Wales. Still, when every allowance has been made, when everything that can be done has been done, what is the state of affairs? It is not disputed by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, as I understand, that the Church in Wales is still the Church of the minority.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Nobody knows.

*MR. ASQUITH: The right hon. Gentleman says nobody knows. I will try and give him some materials for judging. I do not want to dwell again on the question of Parliamentary representation, and I should not now touch on the point but for the efforts of the most militant of the Welsh Bishops to endeavour to get rid of facts and figures which he had better have left alone. The Bishop of St. Asaph has been at the pains to calculate the votes given for and against Disestablishment. He brings out—and I have no reason to doubt his figures—that 145,000 persons voted for Disestablishment, and 86,000 against it. If you take a total electorate of 340,000, that brings out that only 47 per cent. of the electorate voted in favour of Disestablishment, and the proportion who voted against Disestablishment was 26 per cent. Then, says the Bishop, as it is clear that only 47 per cent. of the registered electors voted for Disestablishment, you cannot claim to have a majority of the Welsh people on your side. You have only got to add the 26 per cent. who voted against it to the 27 per cent. who did not vote at all, and you get 53 per cent. not in favour of it. I do not know whether this is a fair specimen of episcopal logic. I do not think it is necessary, at any rate in this House, to attempt to demonstrate the fallacy of it. The truth is, it is quite enough to dispose of the Bishop and his logic to state that in 18 of these constituencies the majority in favour of Disestablishment ran into four figures. When people know that they have a majority of 2,000, 3,000, or 4,000, you feel there is a strong temptation, if not a justification, for some of them to stay at home and not trouble about going to the poll. Passing to the question of actual numbers, the House has never approached this question without our being taunted with unwillingness to expose the question to the test of a religious census. But I confess that the more I have considered the matter the more unsatisfactory and inadequate has it appeared to me that a religious census would be. What is it? It consists of a man writing in a column of a census paper what is his creed or what is the particular denomination to which he belongs. Is that, in itself, any test whatever of whether he actually belongs to one Church or another? The real question that you want to ascertain is, what is the actual working strength and living membership of the different communions in Wales. I will venture to quote on that point a passage, which seems to be peculiarly relevant, from Lord Macaulay. In his history (edition 1858, vol. IV. chapter 13, page 272), he writes regarding the comparative strength of religious parties in Scotland in 1689:—

> "The effective strength of sects is not to be ascertained merely by counting heads. An Established Church, a dominant Church, a Church which has the exclusive possession of the civil honours and emoluments, will always rank among its nominal members multitudes who have no religion at all; multitudes who, though not destitute of religion, attend little to theological disputes, and have no scruple about conforming to the mode of worship which happens to be Established; and multitudes who have scruples about conforming, but whose scruples have yielded to worldly motives."

I think these considerations are equally applicable to the numbers in a religious census in Wales. But, apart from the question of a religious census, we have means of testing the comparative strength of the real, living, active membership of the different religious communities in the Principality. By looking at the numbers of communicants which are regularly published we find that, taking the four leading Nonconformist bodies, they number 381,000, against 118,000 in the Church. In other words, the Nonconformist communicants are in a majority of 263,000. If that is to be regarded as a fair test—[An hon. MEMBER: "No!"] Why not? I do not like to discuss these questions with too much acerbity, or to go too closely into them; but is it to be supposed that the Members of the Church are more lax in this matter than the members of the different dissenting bodies? If not, where does the inaccuracy of the test come in? I should have thought that we might take it as almost exactly the opposite, and might have considered that the Church of England, in proportion to its actual adherents, would have a larger number of communicants than the Dissenting bodies. I find, however, that the Calvinistic Methodists and Congregationalists alone have each a larger number of communicants than the Church of England in Wales. Exactly the same lesson is taught by another test—namely, the attendance at the Sunday schools. The total attendance at Church Sunday schools is 145,000, while in the Sunday schools of the Nonconformist bodies the attendance is said to be 515,000. Therefore, whichever of these tests you apply, you find that the proportion of Nonconformists to Churchmen in Wales comes out at something between three and four to one. Another argument that is often used is in relation to the difference of the two systems with regard to the residence of their ministers. We are constantly being told that, although the Church may be in a minority, yet that its national mission is vindicated and its national character demonstrated by the fact that every parish has a resident minister, whereas in many parishes the Nonconformists have none. According to the Bishop of St. Asaph, whose figures I am content again to take, says that out of 1,000 parishes there are 520 with a resident Nonconformist minister and 480 without. Is the Bishop so ignorant of the actual facts of the religious organisation of the Nonconformists of Wales? Is he so ignorant of the great Calvinistic Methodist movement, and of the fact that in the Nonconformist churches the system of itinerancy early took root and was found to be most effective for religious propaganda? I am informed that of the 4,000 Nonconformist chapels in Wales there is not one among them destitute of Sunday service, sometimes conducted by the minister residing in the parish or in charge of two adjoining parishes, sometimes by laymen who are qualified for the duty. In the large majority there are two preaching services and a Sunday school as well, and in most of the remainder there is one preaching service, one Sunday school, and one prayer meeting. I am told that there is not one of these chapels in which the Sacrament is not administered once a month. Now, let me ask, How does the Church stand in this respect? Is it very important to have a resident minister in a parish when he has no congregation? I am not going to weary the House, but I wish to go into one or two details. I will take the case of the county of Anglesey. I am told, and I invite inquiry, that there are 76 parishes, and out of these 27, or more than one-third, are without rector, vicar, or curate resident in them. In three of these parishes there are no buildings of any kind where the service of the Church of England can be held—the churches have been demolished. In several of the parishes service is held only once a month. In one case the service was attended by 11 persons, including the minister, the sexton, the gamekeeper, and the servants of the squire. The tithes of these parishes which I have been describing, I am told, amount to more than £7,000 a year. This state of things is not due to the religious apathy of the people. The Nonconformist bodies are strong and flourishing in these parishes. The Calvinistic Methodists have in Anglesey 84 chapels and 34 school-rooms, and their communicants number 11,000. Therefore, I hope we shall not hear much more about the necessity of a resident minister. I must not de ain the House more than a few minutes more, but I must answer the question put to me the other day, in view of the fact I have been describing. The question was put by the right hon. Baronet opposite, What is the reason of the hostility of the Welsh people to the Established Church? What was his answer? The right hon. Baronet said the best answer he could discover was that it was a social grievance. A social grievance! He said the Church attracted the most educated classes, and that that was the reason there is this feeling of animosity. Was there ever a more impotent view taken of such a state of feeling—a feeling amply justified by the past history of the Church, and deeply ingrained in the hearts of the great masses of the Welsh people? I can easily make good our proposition. This is not, in the sense of the definition of Lord Salisbury, a national Church. It is not the Church of the Welsh people. It is not the Church which, whatever may have been its origin, for six centuries past or at the present day is looked to by the Welsh people to give natural expression to their religious sentiments and their religious feelings. I shall not again go into the general details of this Bill, which I have twice—once at great length—explained, and before I sit down I will only deal with two or three of the main objections which have been taken. One of the objections urged by the hon. Baronet, and stated with great force, was that in her new *status* the Church will be left in a state of ecclesiastical anarchy; that every clergyman will be a law unto himself, free from jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts, which would be gone, or from any other jurisdiction. I confess I listened to that argument with surprise. The clergyman of the Church will be bound by contract to fulfil the duties of his office, and if he violates that there are abundant remedies. But surely our experience of the Disestablished Church in Ireland, and of episcopal churches in America and the Colonies, shows that these are difficulties not likely to arise. Then, as to the property of the Church, we are accused of dealing with the Welsh Church in a less liberal spirit than was displayed in the case of the Irish Church. Well, we propose that the Disestablished Church shall retain the churches and parsonage-houses and modern endowments, following the precedent of the Irish Church. We propose that the glebe, which in Ireland was sold, shall be transferred to the Parish Council for the benefit of the parish. As for the burial-grounds, I agree that in Ireland the great majority were handed over to the representative body, whereas here we propose to vest them in the County Council. Why do we make that provision? I heard with great admiration the speech of my noble friend, the Member for West Edinburgh, on this point, and I entirely appreciate his position; but the burial-ground cannot be regarded as the property of any particular religious body. By the common law everyone who dies in a parish has a right to be buried in the parish churchyard. Everyone has now the right given by statute to be buried according to the rites of his own denomination. It is impossible to leave these burial-grounds, in which many painful scenes of great intolerance have taken place, to the care of the representative body, and to say that the common law right is not to be maintained. Then, as to the cathedrals, until a time within the memory of many of us, they were scandalously neglected. The Llandaff Cathedral is a case in point, with regard to which, as late as 1854, the Royal Commission reported that it was in a ruinous state, and without any adequate provision for public worship. It is quite true that this state of things has changed, and that this cathedral has been restored and embellished. [An hon. MEMBER: "Who by?"] By subscribers who were by no means all Churchmen. I do not think that any man acquainted with the great national work of the restoration of cathedrals would pretend that it was confined to any particular sect. What do we do with the cathedrals? We place them in the hands of the Commissioners, subject to the obligation to maintain them and keep them in repair, and they are to be held in trust for the continued performance of the same service as hitherto. I believe that to be a liberal and even a generous arrangement. I know very well that it has excited a good deal of hostile criticism, but I do not think that that hostility will be maintained. I have confined myself to what may be deemed the grounds of principle on which the Bill may be attacked. Sir, the Leader of the Opposition, in the Debate on this Bill a year ago, expressed the belief that the democracy of this country would hold with him that, for the welfare of the community, the presence of a standing witness to great spiritual forces in every parish of the land was a vital necessity. I agree so far with the right hon. Gentleman that I believe that the succession of the democracy to supreme authority in this country has not meant, does not mean, and will not mean the enthronement of a merely material ideal of social life, or the banishment or weakening of those great spiritual forces to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, and which in days gone by moulded and coloured the whole fabric of English society. There are needs, as we all recognise, which are as old and as deep as human nature itself, and which no change in the distribution of political power and no rise in the general level of comfort can either satisfy or suppress. But is it necessary that this standing witness should be an officer of the State as well as a minister of the Church? What, as is too often the case in Wales—what if his message is unheeded, if his church is empty, if his mission is futile? Not, be it observed, because of the apathy of indifference, not because the parishioners are torpid or perverse, but because they find satisfaction and stimulus for their religious wants in unconsecrated buildings and in the services of an unauthorised ministry. The people of Wales have shown in days gone by that they can and will provide for their own spiritual needs; and it is in the sincere belief that this measure will minister as well to the religious as to the social welfare of the Principality that I ask the House to affirm it to be both politic and just.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): Whatever our opinions may be on the principle or the details of this Bill, I think we may congratulate ourselves upon three things on the present occasion. In the first place, the right hon. Gentleman has, I cheerfully admit, redeemed his promise to provide some argument in defence of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. In the second place, he has given us in his speech an intellectual treat of no mean order. And in the third place, I gladly recognise an important change in the manner in which he has approached this question; for he has expressed his desire not to offend what he admits to be the natural sentiments of those who entirely disagree with him. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to complain that I did not give him credit for the sincerity of his motives. That was very far from my intention. I cannot question his motives; I do not know what his motives may be. I can only judge of them from his speeches, and what I intended to convey to the House was that the motive which he has recently assumed of a desire to benefit the Church in Wales by this policy does not appear in his earlier speeches, and that his assumption of such a motive, having regard to the notorious origin of this Bill and the views of those who have pressed it on the Government, is felt to add insult to injury by those who attempt to the best of their power to defend the Church. And if I used any language which he thinks too strong, I would say this—let him go to the managing body of any Nonconformist community with which he is acquainted which possesses endowments; let him tell them that he proposes to deprive them of their endowments in his earnest desire for their good; let him see what they will say, and if they do not use language very much stronger than any I have used, I will tender to him my most humble and sincere apologies. Now, I should like first to inquire what is the ground on which Her Majesty's Government base the proposals in this Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. I know there are many persons who believe that the establishment of a Church is in itself, under all circumstances and in any country, contrary to the principles of religion. That view is not only absolutely opposed to the opinions and the practice of every country in Christendom from the time of Constantine the Great to the beginning of the present century, but is also inconsistent with these arguments about majorities and minorities which formed so large a part of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. But I am not quite sure what the view of the right hon. Gentleman himself may be. His whole argument, especially his argument with reference to the advantages of autonomy to the Church, was an argument for the Disestablishment of the Church in England as well as in Wales. That may be the opinion of individual Members of Her Majesty's Government; it is not the view which has been accepted by that Government as a whole. They have attempted, and are attempting to attack the Church of England under the disguise of yielding to what they call the national demand of Wales. Wales is to be treated in this matter as a separate nationality, contrary to history, contrary to geographical fact, and I believe, contrary to what would be the legitimate conclusion from those principles which Her Majesty's Government have adopted. If we are told that in such a matter as this Wales is entitled to be treated as a separate nation because 31 out of 34 Welsh Members demand it, I should like to ask, how far Her Majesty's Government are prepared to go in the way of concession for this reason? If on these Home Rule principles—which are dear to Her Majesty's Government, and which were eloquently expressed in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman—31 out of 34 Welsh Members were to go to the Government and say, "We insist on a separate Government and separate Parliament for Wales," what would be their answer? Would they grant that demand? I am very confident that just at the present moment they would decline to comply with a demand which, if made by Brittany to France, would be simply laughed out of court. Surely therefore the mere fact that this demand has been made is not sufficient. Surely we must consider the question on its merits, and we must be satisfied, the Government must be satisfied, and the country mustbe satisfied that the demand is just and right in itself. I understand the view of the right hon. Gentleman to be that the Establishment of the Church in Wales is unjust, because it confers ascendency upon the Church of a small minority, which is contrary to religious equality. Well, if there is any force in that argument, it will carry the right hon. Gentleman a great deal further than this Bill. If it is an injustice to those who are not members of the Church that the the Church should be established, it is equally an injustice whatever may be the numbers of the Church and whether those who dissent from it are in a majority or minority. In fact, you may go further. If you were to disestablish the Churches in Ireland, in Scotland, and in Wales, you would really be creating a greater injustice than at present exists, from this point of view, with regard to Nonconformists in England. But I demur altogether to this argument. I entirely deny that it is based upon any true conception of what Establishment means. Establishment does not mean that the State has brought a Church into existence. It does not mean that it has selected a particular denomination out of many to be the Established Church of this country. At any rate, that is not the meaning of Establishment in England or in Wales. In England and in Wales, as the right hon. Gentleman admitted to the full, the Church and the State from the earliest ages have grown up together, and, in fact, I think it could truly be said that the State has grown up under the shelter and counsel of the Church. The Church was the State in its spiritual aspect, and the Church was naturally the organ which the State utilised in the war against ignorance, vice, and crime—a war which cannot be so effectually waged by any other agency, and, to descend to a mean argument, cannot be so cheaply waged by any other agency. I admit that circumstances have changed; the whole people no longer belong to one religious denomination. But the Church still occupies the same position, not of privilege but of duty; on it falls a duty which no other denomination can perform, and if it be relieved from that duty no other denomination will perform. The right hon. Gentleman discussed at some length the advantage which we believe to result from the existence of resident ministers of the Church in all the parishes of Wales, and compared their position with those ministers of other denominations. I think he has been misinformed with regard to Anglesey. I dare say there are some parishes which have been united and churches which exist no longer; but the theory and, as a rule, the practice of the Church is that there shall be a resident minister in every parish. That is, not a matter merely of Sunday services, not even of week-day services, but of general ministration to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people. I venture to say that is a work which cannot be performed by the ministers of any denomination at all if you relieve the Church of the duty which is imposed upon it by Establishment. But why are we to make this great change upon what may be and seem to us to be purely ephemeral grounds? It is admitted even by the right hon. Gentleman that for many centuries the Church was not only in theory but in fact the national Church of Wales. He referred to the Norman period. I readily agree with him that in the Norman period the Church in Wales was treated as unfairly by the Norman conquerors as the Saxon Church in England was treated by them. But she revived; and the right hon. Gentleman passed very lightly over her flourishing condition under the Tudors and the Stuarts. The Church was persecuted most of all in Wales under the Commonwealth. There were atrocious Acts passed at that time by the Puritans for Disendowing and putting an end if they could to the very existence of the Church in Wales. But those Acts failed because throughout all that period the Church in Wales was the National Church; and, so far from it being the fact that there were only intervals during which the Church in Wales was a National

Church, I contend that there were only intervals when she was anything else. After the Reformation, for 250 years, as the right hon. Gentleman himself has admitted, the Church in Wales was the National Church. She was the Church of the great leaders who gave rise to the Nonconformist movement, and only within the last 60 or 80 years has she ceased to be the National Church in Wales in fact as well as in theory. During the last 10 years her growth and aggressive vitality is admitted by everyone. Having regard to these facts of history, surely it is monstrous that, because just at the present moment she may be the Church only of a minority, we are by the Bill now proposed to declare that she has not only lost all claim at the present time to be considered the National Church of Wales, but can never be in the position to reassert it. Surely at this moment, when something like a wave of secularism is passing over the world, it is not the time when any man believing in Christianity should wish to deprive the State of that connection with religion which has formed part of her organic life during so many centuries, and to weaken the most capable antidote to that evil gospel of individual selfishness which is doing so much injury to the very foundations of our modern society. The right hon. Gentleman professes—and far be it from me to say that he does not profess it with sincerity—the desire to do good to the Church. He says that in his belief the Church is hindered and fettered in her work by the fact of her connection with the State. I am sure that the members of the Church in Wales are only too anxious to live in peace and good will with their neighbours. I am convinced that if they could see that the provisions of this Bill really would put an end to bitterness and animosity in Wales—that, hurtful as they might believe those provisions to be to their own position, they would cease to oppose them. But they ought to be better judges of the needs of their Church than the right hon. Gentleman; and almost unanimously, I believe, the members of the Church in Wales disagree with his view on this subject. They are referred for consolation to the result of Disestablishment to the Irish Church. I admit, and every one must admit who has considered the question, that it has been of advantage to the Irish Church to secure freedom from interference in her ecclesiastical and spiritual affairs by those who do not belong to her community. I admit that it has been of advantage to the Irish Church to secure the representation of the laity in her legislative assemblies; but there are matters which Churchmen in Wales may consider, and rightly consider, even of greater importance than those things. What about their connection with the Church of England? The right hon. Gentleman said that there was ample provision for maintaining ecclesiastical and spiritual discipline in Wales after the passing of the Bill. If it be so, there is only one way in which it can be secured? I expect the members of the Church in Wales value, perhaps above everything else, their ecclesiastical connection with the rest of the Church of England. I am quite sure that the rest of the Church of England values its ecclesiastical connection with them, and I entirely demur to the view which was expressed by the President of the Board of Trade the other day, that the Church of England in her ecclesiastical and spiritual life remains untouched and unharmed by the Bill. But how about the members of the Church in Wales in this matter? I contend that it is absolutely impossible, under the provisions of this Bill, whatever kind of future organisation they may select and adopt for themselves, for the members of the Church in Wales to remain in the same ecclesiastical and spiritual connection with the rest of their Church as that in which they are at the present moment. They may form a separate Church, no doubt, just as the members of the Church in Ireland did; but as a Disestablished Church it is impossible for them to maintain their present connection with the rest of the Church which will remain established in England. They might well think—and I believe they do think—that this disruption, this wicked and cruel disruption, is a far worse thing to them ecclesiastically than any benefits such as have been gained by the Church in Ireland. There is another point of view from which the members of the Church in Wales may also regard this question. They may view it not only as Churchmen, but as members of the State. They may consider, and ought to consider, what effect this Bill will have on the future of Wales. What affect has the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Irish Church had on the condition of the State in Ireland? I think he would be a very rash man who would assert that it had done the faintest good. I hold that it has done a great deal of harm. As an eloquent prelate said, in speaking on the Irish Church Act—the revolution in Ireland began with the Church and has gone on to the land; since the passing of that Act, political differences in Ireland have been deeper and more bitter; and divide, just as completely as ever before, Protestants and Roman Catholics into two different corps. Since the passing of that Act the movement for separation, or, at least, for an alteration in the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, has certainly gained increased strength. Churchmen in Wales see these things. They may dread the effect which a similar policy will have on their position as members of the State in Wales, especially if they bear in mind a definition which was given to the House in the Debate on the First Reading of this Bill by the right hon. Baronet the Member for East Denbighshire, and the view expressed by the right hon. Gentleman himself. The Church in Wales is called an alien Church. Why is it called an alien Church? The right hon. Baronet told us the other day that it was because the laity and the clergy of that Church were aliens in their attitude towards the great national movement now going on in Wales. That view has been reaffirmed by the speech of the right hon. Gentleman tonight. What does that mean?

*Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbigh, E.): I was speaking of the national education movement in Wales.

*Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: The right hon. Gentleman did not say so; and this is not the first time on which his own recollection of what he said has differed from that of other people. But I do not lay stress on anything he says. The same sentiment was expressed by the Home Secretary. What it means is surely this. The members of the Church in Wales are just as much attached to their country as any other persons. They are just as proud of their race and history. But, perhaps they are more educated and more intelligent, and possess broader views of patriotism; and, therefore, they know that what is called "the national movement" leads directly to Home Rule, and that what Home Rule for Wales means is a separate Government and Parliament for Wales; and they realise that there could be nothing worse for Wales than such a thing as that. I think I may find some confirmation of that view in the speeches of the hon. Member for the Carnarvon Boroughs and other hon. Members from Wales. Whether there are or are not religious motives for the support which is given to this Bill, in my belief there are certainly strong political motives; and there are political motives of another kind. The Prime Minister, with reference to the Church in Scotland, made a very remarkable statement some little time ago. He said—

> "In Scotland nearly every manse is an agency for the Tory Party, and the continuance of the Establishment and the Liberal Party side by side in Scotland is coming to be inconsistent."

Is there no feeling of the same kind on the other side of the House with reference to the Welsh Church? Are we absolutely sure that even the right hon. Gentleman himself has no hidden sympathy with these feelings in his attack on the Church in Wales. If it be so, I can only say that such a motive is utterly inconsistent with his self-congratulation upon the thought that in this matter the Liberal Party are engaged in the pursuit of absolutely disinterested aims. I am afraid that, as in Ireland, so in Wales, the Disestablishment and the Disendowment of the Church proposed by this Bill, the manner in which they are to be carried out, and the reasons by which they are justified, will give a distinct impetus to the policy of Home Rule. But I turn from Disestablishment to Disendowment. They are coupled together in this Bill, and they must be coupled together, because I do not believe there is a single Welsh Member out of the whole 31 who would support Disestablishment without Disendowment. Now, how did the right hon. Gentleman attempt to justify the policy of Disendowment? Any real justification was singularly absent from his speech; but he tried to justify it on the ground of attempts which have been made by Parliament in past generations to legislate on matters connected with the government, discipline, and doctrines of the Church. With the exception of the Irish Church Act, he never quoted a single instance in which—whatever other Legislation in regard to the Established Church may have been attempted—Parliament had sought to deprive the Church of those endowments which maintain her Bishops and Clergy. The right hon. Gentleman calls the endowments of the Church national property. He asserts that they are the special patrimony of the people, which has been enjoyed for a time by the Members of a particular religious community. If that is so, there must have been a time when they belonged to the people. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me when that time was? I defy him to prove that there was any such time at all. Take tithe, which is, of course, the main part of the endowments. Does the right hon. Gentleman contend that tithe ever belonged to the people? He does not venture to say so. I will give him two authorities to the contrary, which I think even he will not dispute —Professor Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford, and Professor Freeman, two of the greatest historians of our time. Professor Stubbs says:—

> "Tithe never belonged to the nation, and was not the gift of the nation."

Professor Freeman says:—

> "The Church preached the payment of tithe as a duty. The State gradually came to enforce that duty by legal enactment."

But is every source of income, the payment of which is enforced by legal enactment, therefore the property of the State? That will carry the right hon. Gentleman a great deal further than the endowments of the Church. It is a fact that until very modern times the suits for non-payment of tithe were of ecclesiastical cognizance only. I contend, in spite of anything which the right hon. Gentleman has said, that, with some small exceptions, not a penny of the endowments of the Church, whether in England or in Wales, ever belonged to the State, was ever given by the State, or was ever voted by Parliament. With these small exceptions every penny was given by individual donors. We are often told that we ought to maintain our Church by a voluntary system. The Church was the original founder of the voluntary system. The Church has been maintained by the voluntary system for centuries. She is maintained by the voluntary system now. I admit that there might have been a certain process in the dark ages—a kind of spiritual distraint—which aided the voluntary system. But that process is not absolutely unknown in the present time, and the only difference between the mode in which the Church has been maintained and the mode in which Nonconformist communities are now maintained, is that the voluntary system has gone on for centuries with respect to the Church, and only for a few generations with respect to the Nonconformist communities. The right hon. Gentleman told us something of the injury done to the Welsh Church by the Norman Conquest. I can tell him something more. The See of Llandaff was almost as completely disendowed by the Norman conquerors as he would propose by this Bill. Out of 24 canonries only two escaped. But it was re-endowed by donors whose gifts may be seen recorded in ancient charters which still exist. The see of Bangor was endowed by Bishop Amian in the time of Edward I. The very ancient see of St. Davids and the see of St. Asaph were endowed in the reign of Henry VIII. I could go on to parochial benefices; but I noticed that the right hon. Gentleman did not venture to touch upon this question. Charters may be found which show beyond dispute how these endowments have been brought about. If it is true, as the right hon. Gentleman alleges, that all this is national property, why has he taken the date of 1703? Why are not gifts given to the Church after 1703 just as much national property as those given before? The only reason that the right hon. Gentleman has given is, that only from that year (1703) it became possible, through the machinery of Queen Anne's Bounty, for private persons to invest in landed property for ecclesiastical purposes. The right hon. Gentleman knows very well that this does not apply to tithe. Lord Selborne says:—

> "For perpetual grants of tithe no licence in mortmain or other temporal confirmation was ever necessary. They were deemed in law to

be things mainly spiritual and to be held by no feudal tenure."

Then, why should tithes granted before 1703 not be respected as much as tithes granted after 1703? And with regard to lands? Lands have been granted before 1703 by private donors to the Church—private donors of all kinds, kings, queens, princes, nobles, bishops and commoners—as can be proved by charters. Why are these things to be taken away if granted before 1703? I have two instances here to which I will refer. I hope I am not wearying the House, but these are matters with which the right hon. Gentleman absolutely neglected to deal, and which must be enforced upon the attention of the country. Here is a case. In a charter of Bishop Bernard, of St. Davids, it is recorded that William Reval endowed the Church of Hay, in Breconshire, with land and tithes, which are specified in the charter. This was between 1115 and 1135. Afterwards, before 1154, this church, with others, was granted to the Priory of St. John of Brecon, and by a subsequent charter it was stipulated that there should be a vicar of the parish, who should receive the whole revenue of the church, paying the monks five silver marks per annum. The charter is now preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. I have no doubt that this endowment is amongst those ancient endowments of the Church of Hay which the right hon. Gentleman wishes to confiscate. By what right does he propose to take them away? I have another instance. The vicarage of Slebech, in Pembrokeshire, was endowed about the year 1640 by George Barlow by a deed preserved among the parish papers. The words of the deed are:—

> "I, George Barlow, of Slebech, finding it an ancient institution of primitive times to make, consecrate, and endow vicarages with tithes, the patrons reserving power to themselves of presentment, and holding it also unjust and a principle in conscience not to perform the same accordingly, do make a perpetual vicarage endowed with cure of souls in Slebech, presentative by me and my heirs, and do also freely give and for ever grant unto the said parish church of Slebech and vicars the house lately by me to that purpose built and lands thereto belonging near the churchyard, together with all tithes within the parish of Slebech, township of Priston, and Milhill in the parish of Boulton, except Sheaffe, and all manner of tithes of what nature and kind soever issuing within the demesne lands of Slebech now in my tenure and occupation."

And then we go on to some remarkable words. They may seem strange, but they were written in the simple faith of those days:—

> "If any shall take away from the holy Church of God the premises in part or in all so by me given (which I hope no man ever will) let his account be without mercy at the dreadful Day of Judgment, when he shall come to receive his doom at the hands of the Judge of heaven and earth, to whom I dedicate the same."

Of course I know very well that the right hon. Gentleman and those who support this Bill do not think they are doing what would bring them within the terms of this curse, but surely this shows that this man, George Barlow, believed he was giving his property to God, and surely it shows also that others who made similar gifts did the same. What I again ask is, What right has Parliament to take away property so given to the Church in Wales in the year 1640 any more than it has to take away property given to any Noncomformist community last week. We are sometimes told that in early days there was only one Church to which persons could make gifts; but can any one argue that, if those who made the gifts had not agreed with that Church, they would have given them at all? It was also said that the property of the Church was transferred at the Reformation from the Church of Rome to the Church of England. The right hon. Gentleman and the President of the Board of Trade agree with me in holding that that view is absolutely erroneous. I hope they will press their opinion upon their colleague, the Prime Minister, because at Cardiff in January last the noble Lord said:—

> "We all remember what the State once did with the endowments, how it took them at the time of the Reformation from the old Church."

He went on to say it was not wise for the defenders of the establishment to rest too much upon the right of property, because the indefeasible right to this ancient property rested not with the Reformed Church but with the Roman Catholic Church. There is, I know, a small part of the endowments of the Church in Wales which was given to the Church by Parliament. In the early part of this century Parliament made a grant of a million and a half towards building churches, and I think of

£1,100,000 towards aiding Queen Anne's Bounty in augmenting benefices. Of these sums £9,440 was given towards building churches in Wales, and £168,000 towards augmenting benefices there. But the College of Maynooth received Parliamentary grants for building purposes; Noncomformist communities in England in those days received Parliamentary grants. I am sure no member of the House would be so mean as to ask the Church of Wales to give back the few thousands received in building grants when they remember that during the last 50 years, in sums of £500 and upwards, Churchmen in Wales have spent no less than £2,216,000 in building and restoring churches. The operations of Queen Anne's Bounty have been referred to, but all Queen Anne did by her bounty was to restore to the Church property that had previously belonged to it but of which it had been despoiled, first by the Popes and then by the Kings. Therefore, I assert that, with the slight exceptions to which I have alluded, all the endowments of the Church in Wales are as absolutely the property of that Church as the endowments of any religious community in the kingdom can be. I care not what was done in Ireland—I never assented to the Irish Church Disestablishment Act, but voted in every division against it—this House has no more moral right to take one single penny of those endowments than it has to take the property of any corporation, any trade union, any society in this country. There is no property which is devoted to higher purposes, there is none that is devoted to objects more in accordance with the wishes of its donors, and with the spirit of our present day, if we may judge from the enormous increase made to those endowments continually by voluntary contributions, and, last of all, there is no property, corporate or private, which does so much good. I hope I have said something to show that justice, at any rate, does not demand that the Church in Wales should be despoiled of her endowments. I would now like to say a word upon another argument. It is said, and it is true, that these endowments are the accident and not the essence of the Church, that if they were taken away the Church would continue to exist. No doubt, she would, as she existed before them. It is said they are very small in amount. That is true. The right hon. Gentleman estimated the total annual value of the ancient endowments of the Church in Wales which he proposes to take away from her, at about £280,000 a year. [Mr. ASQUITH: "Gross."] Gross, quite so. I have calculations, and I believe they are true, looking to the present very depressed value of the tithe and land, which make the net annual value of these endowments no more than £157,000, and of that amount £7,000, at least, would have to be expended in salaries and cost of the Welsh Commissioners. Then, what we are dealing with practically, so far as any benefit to Welshmen who are not members of the Church is concerned, is the sum of £150,000. It is said that the Church in Wales can afford to lose this, that it will be replaced by new endowments. It might be replaced by new endowments, but it is for those who would take those endowments away and at the same time profess their desire that the work of the Church in Wales should be efficiently carried on to show how that work can be efficiently carried on all over Wales without these endowments. Three arguments are used in support of this view. The first is that the growth of the Church in Wales is mainly in the large towns and more populous neighbourhoods, and that there she is practically working on the voluntary system alone. Now, that is not correct. Take the county of Glamorgan, the most populous county in Wales. The gross endowments of the Church in Glamorganshire are £26,327 a year. The net annual value of those endowments, I take it, would not be more than £15,000. But that is not all that the Church receives at the present moment by way of endowment in Glamorganshire. In these populous and mining districts she receives from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in annual grants to incumbents and curates no less than £13,119, almost as much as is derived from the ancient endowments of which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to deprive her. Therefore there is in these populous centres a substantial nucleus of endowment round which these voluntary offerings centre. If you were to take this nucleus away, if you were to deprive Wales, as you must deprive Wales, if this Bill becomes law, of the grants made by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners which are provided from Church property in England, you would deprive the Church in Wales in these populous centres of much more than her ancient endowments. Then we have been told that the voluntary system has been successful in the Colonies. Now, the Church in the Australian Colonies was endowed by grants of Crown lands, some of them situated in the cities and towns, and those lands have now become of considerable value. The Australian Government gave to the Church in these Colonies complete powers of self-government. They never touched her endowments, which were State endownments if ever there were State endowments in the world. The result has been—I state it on high authority—that the Church in Australia is reasonably well off and successful in the cities and towns; but is half-starved in the country districts. Let us take the Church in Ireland. The Church in Ireland after disestablishment was left with a capital endowment of rather less than a million; which has been very considerably increased by the voluntary contributions of her members and by the able management of her financial advisers. But, in spite of that, churches have been closed, large parishes have been thrown together, and stipends have been reduced. I admit that her general condition is certainly not unsatisfactory from a financial point of view for a Disendowed Church. Why? Because Parliament dealt with her fairly. Parliament was not generous to the Irish Church; it was just. But the Bill is not just to the Church in Wales. It is simply mean. Surely it is mean to deprive Incumbents—who after Disestablishment resign their charge with the consent of the representative body of the Church—of a very large part of their life interests. The result of this must be to hinder the Disestablished and Disendowed Church from sending her ministers to those places where their services may be most required—to impose a heavy fine upon promotion to Bishoprics or other important positions in the Church in Wales, and a temptation to revert to the objectionable practice of looking outside Wales for Welsh Bishops, and, lastly, to prevent any re-endowment of the Church by her own clergy. There is no provision in this Bill, as there was in the Irish Act, for the commutation of life interests by the Commission. By the provision which diminishes life interests on resignation the right hon. Gentleman has made it impossible that any life interests should be commuted in any other way, because the uncertainty of the amount of those interests would be so great that no life insurance company would undertake the transaction. Still meaner is the treatment of curates—men who have gone through a long and expensive education on the faith of the existing law, and whom you refuse to recognise as entitled to any compensation at all when they lose their curacies on the death or the resignation of their existing Incumbents. But what is meanest of all is the treatment of Churchmen in Wales with respect to their cathedrals and churchyards. The right hon. Gentleman attempted to excuse and justify this; but I cannot help thinking that when we come to the discussion of the Bill in Committee he will be induced to change his views on the point. Cathedrals are of no money value, but they are of incalculable value to the members of the Church in Wales. The proposals of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to them have neither the courage of confiscation nor the grace of liberality. He does not venture to take away the Cathedrals as he would take away the churchyards. He gives Churchmen the right to use them, but they are to belong to the Welsh Church Commissioners. Why? In order that there may be an opening for some future scheme for the use of these Cathedrals—which belong to the Church, if anything ever did belong to the Church—by the members of other religious denominations. The right hon. Gentleman said that the members of the Church have no special claim to the churchyards. Nonconformists are and were buried in them, but mainly before burial grounds were attached to Nonconformist chapels, as is now commonly the case; but Churchmen have always been buried in them. In these churchyards lie their nearest and dearest, and they have been added to by the gifts of Churchmen. Why, then, should you take them away? By doing so you are taking away from the Church something which is infinitely more valuable to her than it can be to anybody else. In 1844 there was a Debate in Parliament on the Dissenters' Chapels Act, when it was proposed, and rightly so, that the possession by certain Unitarian congregations of what were formerly Presbyterian chapels should be confirmed by law. In the House of Commons, on that occasion, Lord Macaulay said, with regard to the proposal that these congregations should not be allowed to retain the Chapels:—

> "You are robbing us of what we consider invaluable, to bestow it in a quarter where it can have no other value than as a trophy of a most inglorious war, and as an evidence of the humiliation of those from whom this property has been wrested."

Those eloquent words are exactly applicable to the proposals of this Bill with regard to the Cathedrals and the churchyards. The spirit which has dictated them is not the spirit of generosity; it is the spirit of persecution. Persecution springs from fear. I do not know whether Her Majesty's Government are afraid of the Church in Wales; but I do know they are afraid of the Church in England, and what they desire to do by these proposals is to establish a precedent in respect to the Church in England. Before I sit down I should like to say a few words upon the purpose to which this revenue of £157,000 a year is to be devoted by the Bill. I have no doubt this has been the most difficult—and will be the most difficult—part of the right hon. Gentleman's task. This revenue mainly consists of tithes, and in speaking of it I shall allude solely to tithes. I observe that last night the right hon. Gentleman, in addressing another audience, said something on this point which, I think, deserves notice. He drew a picture of the feeling of a small Nonconformist freeholder in Wales, who, having to maintain his own chapel, is compelled to pay tithe issuing out of his land to a Church in which he does not believe, and the right hon. Gentleman impressed this on his audience as a hardship. I admit that I think if I was in the same position I should feel it something of a hardship myself; but what is the conclusion to which this argument leads? The great bulk of the tithe in Wales is paid, not by small Nonconformist freeholders, but by landlords who are members of the Church. They willingly pay this tithe for the maintenance of their Church. The right hon. Gentleman would give them a grievance instead of the small Nonconformist freeholder, because he proposes to compel these Churchmen to maintain their Church and to pay the tithes to something else. If the small Nonconformist freeholder is sufficiently honest—and I have no doubt he is as honest as his richer neighbours — he will feel that he ought not to put this tithe into his own pocket, or to apply it to relieving himself of rates. But he would, doubtless, like to apply it to the maintenance of his own chapel. That, however, is not an argument for this Bill; it is an argument for concurrent endowment. I suppose I am one of the few remaining Members of the House who voted in 1869, when it was clear that the country was determined that the Irish Church should be disestablished and disendowed, that the funds should be applied by way of concurrent endowment. If and when it is clear—thank God it is not clear yet—that the country has made up its mind that the Church in Wales shall be disestablished and disendowed, I should hold the same opinion still. I challenge the right hon. Gentleman to carry his argument to its logical conclusion, and instead of devoting the tithe in Wales to hospitals, infirmaries, musuems, and higher education, to allow the small Nonconformist freeholder to devote it in future, after disendowment, to the purpose to which it is alleged he desires to apply it—to the maintenance of his own form of religion. In the present scheme there is an immense difficulty in the proper allocation of this money. I do not refer to the central fund. That is a small matter—in the gross only £46,000 a year, and in the net it will not amount, I believe, to more than £29,000 a year. It will have to bear the £7,000 a year, or thereabouts, which must at the very least be the cost of the Welsh Commissioners, judging from experience in Ireland. It will also have to bear the accumulated interest on the large advances which it will be necessary for the Treasury to make in the

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earlier years of the working of this scheme. Therefore, there will be little or nothing for a long time available from the central fund for the purposes named by the right hon. Gentleman—for an academy of art, for a museum, and for higher education. What I refer to mainly are those revenues which are derived from tithe and are the property of the incumbents. They are to be handed over to the County Councils; but in framing schemes for their disposal, the County Councils are to have regard to the needs of the parish from which they arise. I maintain that, by the scheme of the Bill it would be impossible for the County Council to have regard to anything else. These parochial tithes will only fall into the possession of the County Council by the gradual cessation of separate life interests in each particular parish, and the County Council cannot deal with them until they do. The fragment, which would be all the County Council could take in any one case from the claims of the parish, would be absolutely insufficient to be utilised by the County Council in a scheme for the general needs of the county. The County Council could not retain these fragments, as they came in, in order to utilise them for county purposes, without settling the definite object to which they should be applied, and it could not settle that object beforehand. Let hon. Members think with what enormous tenacity the inhabitants of the smallest rural parishes of England have, in late years, clung to their charitable endowments, and how they have refused, where they could possibly avoid it, to allow one single penny of those endowments to be expended beyond the parish itself. Let hon. Members consider how these views are growing, and how they are certain to be impressed by parochial influence on the County Councils, and then ask themselves whether it will be possible, under the circumstances I have described, with these endowments only falling in at intervals, for the County Councils to do anything else but to keep the endowments in the parishes from which they spring. What will be the result? In one parish you will have tithe belonging to a layman, which, therefore, will continue to be paid after the passing of this Bill. In the next parish you will have tithe payable to the central fund, and land also belonging to that central fund. In these two cases the parish will get nothing from these tithes and these lands. In a third parish you will have the incumbent living perhaps for 50 years, and retaining his life interest for the 50 years, during which the parish will derive not a single penny from these funds. In the fourth parish, perhaps the smallest of all, perhaps the richest of all, and perhaps least in need of such aid, you will have the tithes falling in at once, and the County Council will have to devote them to the demands of that parish. Sir, there never was a scheme framed to promote such envy, hatred, malice and uncharitableness between the inhabitants of unlucky parishes and the inhabitants of lucky parishes as the scheme proposed in this Bill. I do not know whether I might venture to make a suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman. He told us he was in a dilemma on the First Reading of the Bill. He argued that if he gave these funds according to population, the result would be that populous counties like Glamorganshire would mainly benefit, and the places from which the tithes issued would get next to nothing. I think I have shown that under the scheme of the Bill the tithes will be frittered away for the benefit of these places where they are least required. I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that he should take the bold course that was taken in regard to the funds of the Disendowed Church in Ireland. Let him say:—

> "My Bill is a good Bill; it does not need to be recommended by local bribery; I am bound to take those funds; I consider them national funds, and I will apply them to the national benefit of the people of Wales."

I do not think the right hon. Gentleman will take that course. I will give him an alternative. Suppose he drops this scheme altogether. I admit that some of the purposes, perhaps all of the purposes, to which he could apply this money are good in themselves; but they are not so good, or nearly so good, as the purposes to which it is applied at the present moment. Hospitals and nursing institutions can only be of real benefit to the neighbourhood in which they are situated when they are managed by persons who are imbued by that true spirit of self-sacrifice, that charitable desire to relieve the wants of suffering humanity, which flow from, and can only permanently flow from, definite religious belief. The right hon. Gentleman is doing his best, by depriving the Church of those funds, to diminish the teaching in Wales of definite religious belief. Sir, it has been said by a very eminent person abroad that if the policy embodied in this Bill were to pass into law, it would be felt as a blow at Christianity throughout Europe. But it will not pass into law ; because it is not seriously intended. If it were seriously intended, Her Majesty's Government would have pressed it forward last year. If they had been defeated, either in this House or in another place, they would have taken the verdict of the electors upon it, and would have abided by the result. If the verdict had been, unhappily, in favour of the Bill, it would then, as in the case of the Irish Church Bill, have become law. But the Government have not dared to take that course. And why? because they know very well that their cause is losing ground even in Wales, and that England is hostile to their proposal. Sir, this Bill is now merely a feint against the Church. It is a move, and a feeble move, in the half-hearted game of attack upon the House of Lords ; but its real use is to enable right hon. Gentlemen opposite to delay the Dissolution of Parliament until what they hope may be a more convenient season. Sir, there is one case in history in which the civil power broke up a Church for political objects ; but I have never heard that the result of that proceeding was considered so successful as to challenge imitation. I refer to the story of Jeroboam, son of Nebat. But the Government are not strong enough to imitate that powerful king. A Government with a majority varying from 12 to 15 is incapable of so altering the Constitution of such a country as this as to break up the relations between the Church and the State. Sir, I am convinced that Englishmen will never permit their Church—for she is their Church as well as the Church of Welshmen—to be despoiled of the means by which she does so much good ; or their country to renounce that recognition of religion which has made her not merely a colonising and a civilising, but a great Christianising agency throughout the world. I beg to move that this Bill be read this day six months.

*Mr. J. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.) said that, as a Welsh member, he gave the Bill a very hearty support. If he did not do so it was perfectly certain he would not be in the House of Commons. For the last 25 years a thorough advocacy of Disestablishment was the one indispensable condition for entering Parliament, so far as a very large majority of the seats in Wales were concerned. The question of Disestablishment had been during that period the ruling factor in Welsh politics. The history of the question, as it affected the Parliamentary Representation of Wales, during the past 15 years was very important. In 1880, there were returned from Wales 29 members in favour of Disestablishment, and four against ; in 1885, 30 for Disestablishment and four against ; in 1886, 29 for Disestablishment and five against ; and in 1892, no fewer than 31 for Disestablishent and only three against. The Conservative Party was fond of boasting that the last Administration, which carried out a bold coercive Irish policy, was an exceedingly strong one. But the majority of the whole electorate of the United Kingdom which returned that Party to Power in 1886 was only 82,000 Votes—not much more than the majority which returned the present Government to Power in 1892—and if the Conservative Government thought thought themselves justified in carrying out their Irish policy, how much more were Welsh Members justified in asking the House to sanction the present Bill ; with a majority at its back of close upon 60,000 Votes from Wales alone. He expressed his satisaction at the fact that the right hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol had taken a prominent part in opposition to this Bill because, although they could not agree with him, they recognised that they had in him a fair and honourable opponent. The right hon. Gentleman had said that there was a feeling that the country recognised to the full the unreality of the proceedings in which they were engaged. He respectfully but strongly joined issue on that statement. So far as Wales was concerned there had never been a more real issue than this. He instanced the attitude and spirit of the Welsh Parliamentary Party; it was this question of Disestablishment which had made the Welsh Party, and during the last Session they as a Party had advocated their claim to the time of the House in regard to this question with great persistence. It might be said that this was not true with regard to England; but he maintained that no distinction could be made in a question of this kind between the view of England and the view of the whole country. The House of Commons had already practically sanctioned the principle of this Bill by a majority of over 50 Votes on a previous occasion. The unreality of the proceedings, if such there was, did not consist in any lack of interest on either side of the House, but in the fact that there was not a single representative of Wales who had either the inclination or the courage to stand up in the House in defence of the Church to which, it was alleged, the country was so attached. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol a few days ago made a very valuable admission when he said that among the Welsh-speaking population the Church was in a minority—possibly a small minority—and that Nonconformity was in a large majority. The right hon. Gentleman might have said that Nonconformity was also in a large majority—perhaps a still larger majority—in the English-speaking districts. It was found, on examination of the poll in 1892, that the average majority in favour of Disestablishment in purely Welsh constituencies was 1,811; in districts where the English and Welsh population were fairly equally divided the majority was 949; but in purely English-speaking districts the majority was no less than an average of 2,250. Welsh Nonconformity had a vitality about it which he thought was very clearly exemplified in the history of the growth of Welsh dissent outside the boundaries of Wales. He was informed that there were in London to-day belonging to the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists nine chapels, with 4,000 members, having a property of the approximate value of £97,000; Welsh Congregationalists in London had five chapels, 1,400 members, and valuable property; Wesleyans, three chapels, with 200 members, and property of £4,000; and lastly, Welsh Baptists in London had two chapels, 450 members, and a property of the value of £7,000 or £8,000. The result was that there were in London at the present day 19 Welsh Nonconformist chapels, with 6,000 members, and a property, mostly paid for, of the value of £127,000. There was, however, only one Welsh Church in London, with a membership of 500 or 600. If it were argued that when Welsh Churchmen came up to London they forgot their language and went to English Churches, that was a valuable argument in favour of the national character of Welsh dissent. Before leaving this argument, he had once more to refer to a statement made upon the First Reading of the Bill by the hon. Member for the Tunbridge Division, a statement of which he seemed to be particularly fond, for he referred to the identical point in his speech upon the Bill last year. He said—

> "The Bishoph of St. Asaph had pointed out that the four leading Nonconformist sects in Wales numbered only 47 per cent. of the population, and the late Mr. Dilwyn had estimated the minor sects and Roman Catholics as 3 per cent. of the population. It followed, therefore, that the Nonconformist Christians in Wales amounted to only 50 per cent. of the population. Then the hon. Member for Carnarvon had declared that the adherents of the Church only numbered 10 per cent. of the population. 'It followed, therefore,' reasoned the hon. Member, 'that only 60 per cent. of the Welsh population went to places of worship'"

—which was a libellous suggestion. Now let them look at this a little more closely. He would, for the sake of argument, accept the hon. Member's figures as correct, but let him point out (1) that 30 per cent. of the population belonged to Glamorgan and Monmouth, and was massed in the large seaport towns of those counties. The character of these town populations, and its ever-changing condition, could not but swell the percentage of those who did not attend places of worship; (2) that, without making allowance for this consideration, was it the fact that the statement that only 60 per cent. of the population regularly attended religious service in Wales was a libel upon its religious character? How did the country generally compare with this state of things? It was estimated that there were in England and Wales some 38,000 churches and chapels, with a sitting accommodation for 10,000,000. He believed this to be a liberal estimate, but what followed? This: that if every seat in every church and chapel in the country was occupied next Sunday—which, he was sorry to say, would not be by any means the case—there would be less than 30 per cent. of the population of the country within places of worship; and yet the hon. Member for Tunbridge got up in his place and said that to admit that only 60 per cent. of the population of Wales regularly attend places of worship in Wales constituted a libel on the character of the country. It was not a libel, but a high compliment to Wales, to prove that at least twice as many of the people of Wales were as religious as the people of England, and it was a valuable tribute to the strong, uplifting influence of Nonconformity. He wished to say a word about the money argument. The noble Lord, the Member for Edinburgh (Lord WOLMER), in a speech which they on that side warmly appreciated on account of its unmistakable sincerity, and the fair and liberal tone which animated it from beginning to the end, referred at some length to the pecuniary aspect of the question. He said that Welsh Members had boasted of the triumph of the voluntary principle, and went on to show that the Church members in Wales subscribed voluntarily the sum of £250,000 last year to religious objects, whilst the voluntary donations of Nonconformists only reached the sum of £400,000. He (Lord WOLMER) went on to say that it was no extrication from the dilemma to say that the members of the Church of England were so much richer. But was not this consideration very material to the issue? Might he remind the noble Lord of the following facts? Almost all the land of Wales was held by Churchmen. He need not remind the House of the influence this gave to the Establishment. A very large proportion of the quarries and mines and industrial undertakings were also in the hands of Churchmen. The main bulk of the wealth of the country lay in the hands of the supporters of the Church. Was it to be wondered that at a crisis like this the gifts of Churchmen should amount to £250,000? But he would point out that as the supporters of the Church possess at least three-quarters of the wealth of the country, their subscriptions to religious objects should be at least three times the amount given by the Nonconformists. So that, if the Nonconformists subscribe £450,000, their subscription should be not £250,000, but £1,350,000. But he would advance the argument a step further by pointing out that the pecuniary argument was not by any means summed up by quoting the total sums given by Nonconformists on the one hand in 1894 and the Church of England on the other. In order to appreciate its value they must take a far wider survey; they must go back 100 or 150 years, to a time when the Church, as a spiritual force in Wales, was practically dead, but was in possession of the same funds as it was to-day, and with its members as rich in worldly goods as happily they were to-day; they must note the fact that from that day to this the Nonconformist faith had been the faith of the poor of the country; yet, in spite of this, they had built thousands of chapels and schools, and maintained a ministry which had been and was an honour to the religious character of the country. The real value of these voluntary donations depended on the capacity for giving which lay behind them. Upon this point he recognised that there was a great gulf fixed between himself and hon. Members opposite, which could be bridged. He believed in voluntary contributions, and voluntary contributions only for the furtherance of religion, and he thought that the history of the past, as well as the experience of the present, confirmed that belief. Much had been said as to the Irish Church Act of 1869. He had only to state his strong opinion that that measure was a clear precedent for the measure dealing with the Church in Wales now before the House. And he would go further and say, that if the Irish case for disestablishment was a strong one, the Welsh case was a still stronger. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol said the other night—

> "That the Irish Church Act is a precedent at all. The circumstances of the Irish Church were, unfortunately, in the year 1869, absolutely different from that living and growing condition in which the church in Wales is now. The endowments of the Irish Church were to a large extent Parliamentary endowments, taken from the majority of the population and given to the creed of the small minority, as part of the English settlement in Ireland."

Taking Ireland in 1869, how did the religious communions compare as to number with those of Wales? There belonged to the Irish Church in 1869, 693,000 members; to the Roman Catholic Church 4,505,000; to the Presbyterian Church 523,000; and to other bodies 72,054. In other words, the Establishment in Ireland laid claim to 693,000, but the unestablished churches in Ireland claimed 5,100,548 members. That was to say that the Church of Ireland only claimed 13 per cent. of the whole population of the country. What was the case in Wales in 1892? Taking the communicants of the Church of England at 114,000 they had the fact that the Church of England in Wales could claim, not 13 per cent. of the population, but only 6 per cent. He was willing, for the purpose of his argument, to assume that the communicants were double the number he had stated, and even then the percentage was lower than that claimed by the Church of Ireland in 1869 as belonging to her. Again, the Members returned from Ireland to the Parliament of 1868, which passed the Act Disestablishing the Irish Church, were 65 for Disestablishment and 40 against, or a proportion of 8 to 5, whereas the Members sent from Wales in 1892 were 31 to 3, or over 10 to 1. He, therefore, thought he had proved that in these respects the claim of Wales for Disestablishment was quite as strong as the claim in Ireland was in 1869. It might be said that Ireland was a nation and had a right to call itself a separate nationality, and Wales had not this right, and that, therefore, although opinion in Wales upon this question preponderated much more largely in favour of Disestablisment than it did Ireland, they could not take that into consideration, because, whereas Ireland was distinctly a nation, Wales could not be regarded as such. The Home Secretary had already proved that, from many points of view, the Welsh had every right to consider themselves a separate nationality. The people of Wales had clung to their language with much greater tenacity than the people of Ireland did to theirs. There had recently been a language census in Wales, from which it appeared that those who spoke the Welsh language only numbered 508,036; those who spoke English and Welsh, 402,253, and those who spoke English only, 759,416. In other words there were in Wales to-day 910,289 of the population speaking Welsh, as against 759,416 speaking English, or 55 per cent speaking Welsh, as against 45 per cent. who spoke English only. If they were to exclude from the population the large towns of Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire, which, as he had already shown, ought to be treated differently from many points of view in reference to this argument, then three-fourths of the people of Wales spoke the old Welsh language. Granting that Wales had the right to be treated as a separate nationality, the only remaining question therefore was: Did the Church find itself to-day in harmony with the national sentiment of the people? The hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight argued the other night that Dissent could not represent the national sentiment, because the Church had, from the time of Elizabeth, patronised the Eisteddfod, and because he had been informed that only 18 out of the 31 Welsh Disestablishment Members could speak Welsh. Such arguments, he asserted, were not worthy of the great ability of the hon. and learned Gentleman. Did the Church of England in Wales to-day find itself in harmony with the national feeling of the country? Did it represent the nation? Archdeacon Howell, one of the very foremost Welsh clergymen—["Oh!"]—said in 1890 that it was an unquestionable fact that the majority of the people of Wales were not found within the pale of the Church, and under the recent alternative Disestablishment Scheme promulgated by a number of clergymen in Wales, emphasis was placed upon the fact that the present conflict going on in Wales was disastrous to national unity, and seriously impaired the spiritual life of the country. One of the objects of this scheme was "to restore to their beloved Church her ancient national character." If they had to restore that, how could it be said that the Church at present was in harmony with the national aspirations of the people. The unwillingness which was found in Wales among Welsh Churchmen to incur much pecuniary sacrifice in the defence of the Church, was to be found in the fact that before Members of the Church of England could be induced to come forward in Wales as candidates in defence of that institution, it was necessary to have recourse to what was known as the Grosvenor House Fund. That fund had been provided at the instance of the Duke of Westminster for this specific purpose. If the English Church were really a national institution, and the people of Wales were so attached to it, why should it be necessary to go outside for English gold. They had, as Nonconformists, reversed this order of things, and had raised among themselves a large fund for the purpose of carrying the war into the enemy's camp. On the one hand there was the reluctance on the part of Churchmen in Wales to subscribe towards the necessary expenses of defending their own Church, and on the other hand there was the willingness of Nonconformists to do this, and further to provide means to convince England of the strength of their case and the justification for the demands they made. Why was Wales so attached to Nonconformity?—and why had it so strong and deep a hold upon the Welsh people? In the first place, Wales had received its most precious possession through the channels of Nonconformity and the spirit of religion, which had raised the country from the depths of ignorance and superstition, and made it what it was to-day. It was Nonconformity which had quickened and fostered national life, which had taught the country the invaluable lessons of self-respect and self-reliance. In education, in temperance reform, and in the right of the people to exercise local self-government in purely local affairs, in all these things it was Welsh Dissent which had inspired and guided the efforts of the people in the past. He believed there was a bright future for Wales, but they could not make any real progress so long as this bitter controversy remained. He appealed with confidence to the wisdom and justice of the House to give this measure its emphatic sanction. He believed it would result in untold benefits, not only to Dissent, but to the cause of the Church also. It would remove that touch of discord which had been so long flung into every nook and cranny of Welsh life; it would heal this bitter controversy; and, what was more important than all these considerations, he believed firmly it would enable all religious bodies in the future to address themselves unitedly, and with new vigour and whole-heartedness to the high task which had been committed to their charges.

*MR. R. U. PENROSE-FITZGERALD (Cambridge) said, that nearly all the previous speakers had attended to the former Established Church in Ireland, as being more or less in a straight line with the present Church in Wales. Having himself been, since the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland, a member of the representative body there, a similar body to that which the Home Secretary proposed to set up in Wales, perhaps the House would allow him for that reason to give a few experiences of the question of the Church in Ireland. Let them see in the first instance how these two Churches had been attacked? He remembered well when the Bills were brought in for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Ireland, and the three strongest reasons given in this House and the country, in favour of the measure were these:—It was said, rightly or wrongly, that the Church in Ireland was an alien Church, a badge of conquest. and (with absolute truth) that it was the Church of the minority, and in many districts of a very small minority. Were any of these three points the case with regard to the Church of Wales? Unless we could disprove all history, the Church in Wales could not be called an alien Church. It existed before there was any conquest or annexation of Wales, and it was only a play upon words to say that it was in any sense alien to the country or people. Was the Church in Wales a badge of Conquest? It was not imposed on a conquered nation by the conquering nation. It was there before any such conquest took place. Whether it was or not the Church of the minority there were no definite means of finding out, for they had been refused the only possible means of finding out, namely, a Religious Census. Let him call the attention of the House to the way in which it had been proposed to deal with these two Churches. As to the Church in Ireland, there was an official inquiry into the number of persons in Communion with the Church in 1834, in 1841, and again in 1851 there was a census. But in neither of these was there any return of religious profession. In 1861 was the next census, and in this people were required to state the religion they professed, and the result, the number of Roman Catholics were 4,505,265; members of the Established Church, 693,000; Presbyterians, 523,000; other dissenting bodies, 76,000; and Jews, 393. In 1867, three years after this census, Earl Russell in the House of Lords moved for a Royal Commission to inquire into the Church in Ireland, with a view to making its property more productive, and "in order to its more equitable application to the benefit of Irish people." This, with the omission of the reference to "a more equitable application," etc., was acceded to by the Government, and later in 1867, Commissioners were appointed to inquire on the whole organisation and property of the Church in Ireland, its bishoprics, emoluments, dignities and benefices, and the number of members of the Church of Ireland inhabiting the parishes attached to the Churches. In 1868 the subject of the Irish Church again came up, and much attention was given to it, and resolutions in the first instance, and then a Bill for the suspension of appointments in the Church of Ireland were submitted to and passed by the Commons, but rejected by the Lords. Then later in 1868 the Commissioners made a long elaborate and searching Report. They made suggestions for the internal management of the Church and its property. In 1868 was a General Election, and in 1869 the Government introduced their Bill for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Ireland, which with some slight alterations, ultimately became law. It was perfectly certain that none of the three reasons which were given for the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland would hold good of the Church in Wales. In the case of Wales there had been no religious census; and there had been no inquiry as to property such as there was in Ireland. Therefore they were without the information which the House ought to have before it proceeded to deal with this question. In outside controversy there had been persistent and almost malignant misrepresentation about the Church in Wales. All corporate property was easy of attack, and therefore the House ought to be more than ordinarily careful in dealing with it. There was no corporate property more easy of attack than ecclesiastical property. The question of dealing with the Church in Wales was one of importance, not only to the dioceses in Wales, but also to the Church in England. On the First Reading of the Bill very little information was given to them by the Home Secretary. The Bill, he said, was brought in to satisfy the desire of the Welsh people, with the smallest amount of hardship and the least detriment to the spiritual interests of which the Church would continue to be the guardian. If the Bill were brought in to strengthen the Church in Wales that would be another reason; but he did not think that was the real or true reason. There could be but one strong reason for a measure of this description—and that was that it was just. Had the Church in Wales been unfaithful to her trust? Had she been teaching false doctrine? If she had these might be fair and just reasons for the revolution proposed! but no such reason had been given. There had been arguments based on numbers and on language! but there had been no argument showing that injustice was done by the maintenance of the dioceses in Wales. In Ireland, unfortunately, since Disestablishment, there had been more crimes and worse crimes, and there had been an increase in the worst of crimes, those against dumb animals. If there had been any improvement in the Church herself, it was not to be put down to Disestablishment, but it was rather in spite of it. He did not think there was any greater amity between separated religious communities than there used to be. This could be tested by referring to the claims now made as against Church people by other Reformed Communions and by Roman Catholics in regard to educational endowments. In illustration of the claims of the former, the Bishop of Derry said:—

> "An eminent professor of Church history in a theological college of the Presbyterian Church, examined before the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Commission, October 8, 1886, laid down, 'as a matter of simple justice,' that 'all moneys which had been paid in past centuries by any non-voluntary contribution or taxation from bodies or estates which had a Roman Catholic or Presbyterian population, were subject to the religion of those on whom payment was levied.' Consequently, whatever money that came to a school or college from other than Episcopalians, should be taken into account, subtracted from the

Church's holding, and handed over to Presbyterians and Roman Catholics. In regard to the grammar school in question (mainained in great measure for over two centuries by an *ad valorem* tax upon the livings of the clergy of the diocese), this meant a claim to 'an amount in excess of the value of the school buildings and all other property connected with it.''

To show how things stood as between Roman Catholics and Protestants, the Bishop of Derry said :—

> "In the case of a 'Royal School,' a witness of singular ability—a professor in the College of Maynooth—argued very much upon the same lines as the Presbyterian professor. He said that even the transference of the buildings of the school neither would satisfy nor ought to satisfy the Roman Catholics, and that £200 a year over and beyond the fabric must be assured to them as compensation—the net income of the place being £190 a year clear."

These two cases showed that Disestablishment had not brought about the millenium in Ireland which it was said would be brought about in Wales by the passing of this Bill. Before Disestablishment the priest and the parson used to live on good terms; in many parts of Ireland they were *ex-officio* dispensary officers and relieved the wants of the people socially as well as religiously. Whatever might have been the effect of Disestablishment in regard to the growth of the Church of Rome, it had not had the effect which it was said this Bill would have in Wales. The Episcopal Church had grown in spite of our Legislation. In carrying the Irish Church Bill we missed a glorious opportunity — that of levelling up, which we had it in our power to do. We ought not to have devoted Church property to secular purposes, but what we took from one religion we ought to have given to another. We had lost that opportunity for Ireland, but we might do something in that direction in Wales. He hoped that before the Bill got into Committee, if ever it did so, the Home Secretary would earnestly consider whether he could not avoid the mistake committed in Ireland, and, while providing for the life interests of the clergy in Wales, and leaving their successors livings, though it might be impoverished livings, any money that they might take from the Church should be used for religious purposes of some kind.

*Mr. T. PHILLIPS PRICE (Monmouth, N.) said, although he very seldom addressed the House, yet he felt constrained to do so on the present occasion, because this was a question on which his constituents felt more deeply than perhaps on any other. This, too, although they did not belong to any one of the 12 Welsh counties. There was no doubt very great irritation existed in Wales, and it was not likely to diminish in force until the question was settled. It was a genuine people's question. It had not reached its present position by reason of agitation, but as the result of a spontaneous movement on the part of farmers and artisans, and labourers of Wales. How had the demand for Disestablishment been met? He recollected some years ago the late Mr. Raikes, on being put up to reply to the case for Disestablishment met it by denying the nationality of the Welsh people. He said the Welsh were not a nation, because they were numerically small. That was an absurd reason altogether. For the same reason it might be said that Greece, or Denmark, or Montenegro was not each of them a nation. It was as absurd as the theory of the Third Napoleon, who said that small nationalities had no right to exist. The Welsh had all the marks which differentiated a nation. Above all they had a distinct language, and unlike the Irish and the Gaelic, the Welsh language was gaining ground year by year. There were more people speaking Welsh now than in the reign of George III. It was more popular. He could recollect the time when the better classes did not like their children to learn Welsh. Now the better classes were only too glad to get their children taught Welsh. England in the past had treated Wales as she had treated Ireland, and not considered the wishes of the people at all. Her conduct was unsympathetic. What suited England was held to be good enough for Wales. The same spirit is still alive. In a parish in my own constituency, with a large and growing population, many of whom are Welsh speaking, the patron has just presented the living to a young man only six months in priest's orders, who does not understand one word of Welsh. Mr. Lecky had said in some of his writings that State Churches, although they might have many merits were not schools of heroism, and certainly the treatment of Wales by England had not been very heroic. Spiritual governors were sent to govern the people, but they governed without the consent of the people. Why was it that the Scotch people preferred Presbyterianism, the Irish Roman Catholicism, and that the English people were more or less Anglican. The reason was that one nation and one race preferred one religion and another a different one. He did not believe it was for the general good that all these active and distinct spiritual forces should be crushed into one dead level of uniformity. He admitted England's power to deal with this question, but he respectfully asked her to listen to the demands of a nation which, though small and comparatively poor, had national feelings and aspirations.

*MR. GERALD LODER (Brighton) could assure hon. Members from Wales that there were many Members on the Conservative side of the House who had had strong mandates from their constituents to oppose the Bill. How different was the position of the Government from that of the Government which introduced the Bill for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church! The latter were strengthened by Resolutions which had been passed in the previous Parliament, and by having been to the country on the specific question, whereas the present Government were returned on one predominant question—namely, to carry Home Rule. Though the Government might be able to carry the Second Reading by more than their small nominal majority, still, when the Bill got into Committee, they would be at the mercy of the Welsh Members. He disliked questioning the motives of men, but it had been said that the motive for the introduction of this Bill was jealousy rather than justice At all events, there was one curious fact that had not been noticed in the Debate, and that was that the movement for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales has been almost contemporaneous and simultaneous with the growth and revival of the Church in that country. A hundred and fifty years ago there would have been more reason for the introduction of a Bill of this sort than to-day. As the Church had grown stronger and purer, as she had become more able to minister to the wants of the people, the feeling had grown for robbing her of her endowments and depriving her of that pre-eminent position to which, through her antiquity, and the work she had done in the past, she was so eminently entitled. It was sufficient for their purposes to be able to show that the members of the Church of England were larger in number than the members of any other sect in Wales, and undoubtedly that Church had done more for the people of Wales than any of the other sects now existing. If a Church was to be disestablished, they ought to look to the majority of the people who lived under the rule of that Church. When they spoke on Disestablishment in Ireland or Scotland, they looked to the majority of the Irish or Scotch people, and when they spoke of the Disestablisment of the Church of England, why should they not look to the majority of its supporters? Even granting the arguments of hon. Members opposite, he did not believe that this Bill would meet their expectations or fulfil their wishes. What sort of a feeling would be engendered in Wales if they robbed the Church of endowments which had been enjoyed for centuries, and turn away large numbers of curates who were poor enough already? He believed the Bill, if carried, would be not only a great wrong to that Church, but a great loss to the community. Disestablishment would be a national disaster, and Disendowment nothing less than a crime.

*MR. ALBERT SPICER (Monmouth District) said, that for many years he had given a great deal of spare time in the interest of free churches in this country, and therefore he knew something of their temper and spirit in this connection, and in listening to the speech of the hon. Member who had just sat down, he could not help expressing the hope that, knowing the intensity of feeling in regard to this subject which existed on both sides of the House, they would avoid imputing motives. He could readily understand those who had been brought up in the Church of England feeling displeasure with those who take a view favourable to Disestablishment. But let him say that they on his side felt equally intense. They appreciated generally the work the Church of England was doing in many parts of the country. They appreciated the men that it produced, but at the same time they had their opinions as to what constituted a Church. Let him remind them that they could produce evidence showing that so far back as 1652 there were movements in Wales with regard to Disestablishment. The oldest Baptist Church in Monmouthshire is Llanwenarth, near Abergavenny, founded in 1652. Its pastor, William Pritchard, was not allowed to receive payment from the State. His Church passed this resolution in 1655—

> "And also that they do withdraw (i.e. the Baptist Church) from all such ministers that do receive maintenance from the magistrates, and from all such as consent not to wholesome doctrine, or teach otherwise."

In the same way he could produce evidence to show that in the later part of the 18th century there was an agitation going on among many of the Dissenting Churches in connection with this question of Disestablishment. He admitted that the Church had been trying to do, and had done, a great deal, but after all, the progress that Nonconformity had made in the same time was marvellous. Take the great Rhondda Valley; in 1879 the Church of England had seven churches and the Nonconformists 30. In 1884 the Church had 16 and the Nonconformists 115. The average attendance in the 16 churches was 3,200, whilst in the Nonconformist chapels the average attendance was 57,000. So that, looking at it whatever way they pleased, he did not think the Nonconformists in Wales had anything to dread by a full disclosure of the figures He had listened with great interest to the speech of the right hon. Baronet, but he failed to realise not only the intensity of the feeling amongst Nonconformists, but even the state of things in Wales. Reference had been made to endowments. Had they not made some progress as regards public opinion with regard to the dead man's hand? When talking of these endowments he could not help remembering that a few years ago he was invited, though a Nonconformist, to become a Churchwarden, and he had to administer funds originally left for the burning of heretics. If he had lived in those times he should have been burnt himself. He thought it was a mistake on the part of the Opposition not to recognise in this question the principle of nationality, for when they came to deal with the English Church they would be justified in claiming the support of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales against the people of England. Then they had the argument as to the census. He believed that a religious census such as had been suggested would be a sham, and that was why he would not accept it. In regard to the Irish Church religious census he would point out that there was an immense deal of difference between the lines which separated Protestantism from Roman Catholicism and those which divided the different sections of Protestants. In many branches of Christian service Nonconformists were united with members of the Established Church. As an illustration of his meaning, when he said that a religious census on this question would be a sham, he might mention that when he visited the county gaol in Essex a few years ago, the inmates, with a single exception, described themselves as members of the Church of England. He did not suggest that the Church had all the black sheep, but it showed that those who belonged to no particular Church, and who had no religion, described themselves as members of the Established Church directly it came to a question of religious census. Any genuine census, if taken, for instance, on the basis of the number of communicants or of the attendance at church, would be frankly recognised by the supporters of the Bill. Another argument that their opponents made use of was that it would be an extreme injustice to touch Church endowments and to leave Nonconformist endowments intact. Their opponents seemed, however, to forget the fact that endowments to Nonconformist Churches or denominations were subject to special trusts, not only in connection with doctrine, but also with Church government, and that it was impossible for these endowments to be held unless the trusts were properly executed. The Bill recognised Church endowments since 1703 as modern, and therefore to remain the property of the Church of England. He could have wished that the date had been carried back a little earlier. He would have preferred the year 1662, when 2,000 clergy were ejected from their livings; after which it was impossible to doubt that anyone who left money to religious bodies knew and appreciated the particular body to which he was leaving his money. He maintained that the Church to which the ancient endowments were given was not the same as the Church of England of to-day. He was aware, of course, that different opinions were held in connection with this matter, but he believed that the Church in England prior to the reign of Henry VIII. was not the same Church as the Church of England of today. The Church was then subject to the Church of Rome; the Pope was the supreme head. If the endowments of the Church had been held in a similar way to the endowments of Nonconformist Bodies, they could not, in his view, have been held after the Reformation. There was another question. The motives of himself and his friends had been criticised, but he would remind the House that after all the whole Disestablishment question had been pushed into its present position from the deep religious conviction as to what constituted a Church. He held that a Christian Church could only consist of Christian people, who alone have the right of control. It was a fact that the Church of England in the past had shown an utter neglect of the wants of the people; and this was also, to a certain extent, the reason for the present position of the Disestablishment question; and they also had to consider the want of national sympathy on the part of the State Church. He did not think, moreover, that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite realised the political injustice that was inflicted when a sort of hall-marked teacher of religion was placed in a large majority of the Welsh parishes. They all knew how this rankled in England, and by it Nonconformist Ministers and teachers were made to feel that they were looked upon as false teachers. If this feeling rankled in Englishmen, how much more so in the Welsh people, who, if they had been left altogether to the Church of England in the past, would have lapsed practically into a state of heathenism. It was said that Nonconformists were unable to do the work of the Church in Wales. He admitted that possibly they were unable to do the whole of the work, and that even if they could undertake it while, in the language of the Education Department it might be sufficient, it might not be suitable. Though he, himself, preferred the more simple ministrations of the Free Churches, he recognised that those who had been brought up in the Church of England preferred their more elaborate and beautiful service. But he thought the opponents of Disestablishment went too far when they argued in reference to the parishes in Wales that were not provided with residential ministers. After all, if they could have amongst all sections of the Christian Church a greater amount of ministration from laymen, if Christian men would make their influence felt, and if they could get rid of the official element, Christianity would be infinitely more powerful than it was to-day. Some of the best Christian work in England and Wales was now being done by those who were not paid for their services, but who simply gave their spare time in trying to advance the highest interests of their fellow men. Then it was said the Bill, if passed, would spoil the splendid service the Church was doing at the present time. If he believed that Disestablishment would spoil the work of the Church, he would not vote for it. But he did not believe that, because he saw that in countries where Disestablishment had taken place, the interests of religion were in many cases better cared for than in countries where there was an Establishment. The right hon. Member for Bristol said that in the country districts in Australia, religion was half starved. But one of the things that he had noticed more than another in the Australian Colonies was the splendid supply of religious services in the country districts. In some places it was really overdone. He recollected one place in South Australia where there were five churches, three houses, a bank, and an hotel. Of course, the five churches supplied the district around; but hon. Gentlemen would go away with a very false impression if they thought that Disestablishment, at any rate so far as Australia was concerned, had led to any want of provision of church accommodation. In his own constituency, the town of Newport had a very small endowment. Yet there were few towns where the work of the Church of England was being better or more effectually done; and, so far as he had been able to gather, the churches that had no endowment whatever were doing work of the greatest advantage to the town itself. Take again the Metropolitan district of the county of Essex, where there had been an enormous growth of population. The best work there was being done in churches that were practically as voluntary as the bulk of the Free Churches. He, therefore, believed most honestly and sincerely that, instead of being a disadvantage, Disestablishment in Wales would give a new motive power to the Church. It would give a new meaning to the work the Church was doing, and that work would become infinitely more powerful and infinitely grander than it had been in the past.

Lord WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) said, the Home Secretary spoke of the provisions to carry out Disestablishment as the essential provisions of the Bill, and said the other questions were subsidiary. That was not his view. He held that the portion of the Bill dealing with Disendowment was equally important. He did not intend to follow the Home Secretary as to the meaning of Establishment in the past. He had no doubt that those who went before us several centuries ago had very excellent reasons for what they did, and little would be gained by discussing the motives which urged them in the course they pursued. With regard to the meaning of the Establishment at present, the chief points brought out in the Home Secretary's speech were that Bishops sat in the House of Lords, and the State held patronage and the right of presentation to livings, and that the arm of the law could enforce the payment of tithes. The question of patronage and the Bishops sitting in the House of Lords, were, he considered, open to argument, and he did not hold any very decided opinion upon them. But when he came to the question of the enforcement of the payment of tithes, he asked whether the Bill would deprive the State of any of its powers in that respect. From all he could see in the Bill, everybody subject to the payment of tithe at present would have to pay them just the same after the Bill passed. He himself might some day have to be a large payer of tithe in Wales, and he should be extremely pleased to hear that if he refused to pay tithe he should not be forced to do so by the constituted authorities. With regard to the question of the State dealing with the endowments, the only valid reason advanced by the Home Secretary was the precedent of the Irish Church. If they allowed the right of the State to take away the Endowments of the Church in Wales, when the time came for dealing with the Church in England, the Welsh precedent would be quoted in the same way that the Irish precedent was quoted now. He considered that the endowments both in England and in Wales belonged to the Church, and that there was not right of confiscation in the State. It had been said by the Prime Minister that the State endowed the Church, and that which the State had given the State could take away. He believed that bubble had already been pricked, and that that doctrine could not be supported by any historical argument. Even if it was admitted that the endowments were given to the Church at the Reformation, he held that as they had remained the property of the Church for so long there was not title to take them away from the Church. There was one question to which he should like to call attention—namely, the question of how this Bill was going to be carried through the House of Commons, as he had no doubt it would be. There was no doubt that this Bill was supported by the representatives of Wales; and he considered this to be a very strong reason indeed in favour of it. But he should like also to draw attention to this other question. There was another Church, the Church of Scotland, and as long as the question of Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Wales was supported by the argument of the enormous preponderance of Wales in favour of Disestablishment, the House could not lose sight of the fact that in the case of Scotland the Prime Minister had given as a reason for the application of a similar policy to the Church of Scotland, that every manse was an agency of the Tory Party. If they carried this argument to its logical conclusion, those who wished to defend the Church were placed in a difficult position. If they combined together, and the ministers of the Church tried to call their adherents together to defend the Church, then they were to be Disestablished because they prostituted the cause of religion by introducing politics; but if, on the other hand, they did not take a part in politics, then they were to be Disestablished because they did not send representatives to Parliament to support the policy of Establishment and Endowment. The representation of Wales was largely due to the fact of the great agitation on the question of the payment of tithes. He believed that several persons had stated that there was a very strong belief in Wales among Nonconformists that they would receive some share of the Endowments of the Church. He now believed that by this Bill no one would get off without paying tithe, and that no religious body would receive the Endowments of the Church. He did not believe that hon. Members who supported Disestablishment and Disendowment would receive such strong support in the future as they had in the past. He maintained that if this Bill were passed into law and the tithes were taken, say, for higher education, the establishment of museums, and art galleries, a good many persons would object to pay tithe even for these objects. There was another Party who, no doubt, would assist in the passage of this Bill through Parliament—the Members from Ireland. He could understand hon. Members from Ireland supporting the Bill. If Disestablishment were carried out in Wales and England, it would have the effect of driving a large number of persons who belonged to the Church of England into the Church of Rome. That was not his own view alone, it was the view of an eminent authority on the subject—the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith)—who, in December, declared that this would be the effect. There was another body of persons anxious to support this Bill — those who held no religion at all, but were simply Atheists and Agnostics. He asked the keepers of the Nonconformist conscience whether they believed that when they allied themselves with Atheists and Agnostics those men held the view that they were going to benefit religion? What, in short, would be the effect of the Bill? There could be no doubt that in many towns and in richer districts of the country the voluntary subscriptions would be kept up for the benefit of the Church and the maintenance of ministers; but there were also many villages and districts in which, when the tithe was taken away, the subscriptions would not come in, and when there would be no minister resident in the neighbourhood. The first result of this policy would, therefore, be that, when the tithe was taken away the Members of Parliament would be appealed to in order to provide a chapel or a church for their constituents; and the next person to be applied to would be the landlord. He did not believe that in these days of agricultural distress, when the people of the country by their votes said that they no longer cared to have a minister of religion, the landlords would be very ready to provide ministers when the people said that they no longer wanted them. So far from doing any good to the Church, he believed that this Bill struck a most severe blow at the Establishment; and he looked upon the measure as a robbery for the benefit of no one, and without justification or excuse.

*MR. J. LAWSON WALTON (Leeds, S.) said, that the hon. Member had followed the example which had been set him by some of his predecessors in the Debate, by dealing with this question as one which was not confined to the Principality, but as involving equally the Establishment in England. The right hon. Member for West Bristol (Sir M. E. Hicks-Beach), on the First Reading of the Bill, defined some of the principles which he said this Debate would settle, and which would involve certain results to the clergymen of the Church in England. Although they accepted the view of the President of the Board of Trade that the Welsh question was capable of separate treatment, they were not afraid to encounter discussion in the wider field which the right hon. Gentleman had opened up. What were the principles which the right hon. Gentleman had enunciated? According to the view of the right hon. Gentleman, and those who agreed with him, the recognition by the State of some form of religious belief was essential to its political completeness. On the other hand, they held the view that in a democratic community, with full religious equality among the members of it, such a recognition was inconsistent with the principles of democratic Government. If they turned to the United States they saw no Church Establishment, and yet there was ample political completeness on the part of the State. If they looked at the Colonies of the British Empire there was no indication of either civic or political incompleteness on the part of those communities; and yet there was an absence of that political recognition which the right hon. Gentleman said was essential to the civil completeness of the State. If they took Ireland, the last of the enfranchised communities connected with the British Crown, he did not know of any evils of Government in that country which had been attributed to the Disestablishment of the Church, yet civil troubles had often been attributed to the Establishment which had been removed. The right hon. Gentleman further averred that the diversion for religious uses of funds which had been so consecrated was a moral wrong. On the contrary, he should say that where the primary object of the Endowment was the advantage of the people as a whole, and where, in its modern application, that main object could not be fulfilled, the diversion of that Endowment was not a moral wrong but a moral duty. The whole point of the case in favour of Disendowment had been neatly avoided by every supporter of the Establishment who had addressed the House from the other side. They had lost sight of the fact that those were not Endowments of the Church as such; they were an appropriation of funds to religious uses. In the days of these appropriations, religious uses and Church uses were identical. But, in our day, what was intended as a national advantage connected with religion had become the advantage of a sect alone. Consequently the moral justification—in fact the moral duty—had arisen for the State to interfere.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Edinburgh, W.): Will the hon. and learned Gentleman tell us the date when the dividing line is drawn?

*MR. LAWSON WALTON said, that he would take it any period at which it could be shown that the identity between religious and ecclesiastical uses was destroyed. Once let it be established that in appropriating a fund to a religious use it was appropriated to a sectarian use, and the occasion for drawing the line had arisen. Until a certain period of our history, a religious use meant something administered by the Church; but in the present day it might mean something administered by one of a score of sects. The distinction had grown up co-equally with the recognition of Nonconformist civic equality. By the growth of time, the Church had ceased to be a national body. That was the answer to the argument of the hon. Baronet. He was surprised to hear the right hon. Baronet address the same argument to the House, and in the same language and spirit as had been used in the Debates of 60 years ago. Those who had read the speeches of Lord Derby in 1834 might have thought that "the Rupert of Debate" had come back, when the hon. Baronet told the House that for the State to lay its finger on religious endowments was to violate the moral law. But when the right hon. Baronet travelled into the sphere of morals, it was hard to challenge his propositions, because it was hard to find any common standard by which the validity of those propositions could be tested. What test did the right hon. Baronet take in order to determine the moral character of this Legislation? Did he take the approval of the Church itself? The Church had disapproved of every attempt to curtail its privileges, to limit its powers, or to enfranchise the people outside its own pale. And in the light of the lessons of history the supporters of the Bill looked on the disapproval of the Church as an augury of success, and as an assurance that their views were right. Did the right hon. Baronet take as a test of morality the conscientious convictions of the majority of the people of this country? If so, the right hon. Baronet's opponents would look to the result of the Division with confidence; and it would probably be found that more than the normal majority of the Government, thus challenged on matters of conscience, would give their support to the Bill. But the right hon. Gentleman might appeal to a third test—the verdict of history; and, as he would not be accepted as a true prophet of the opinion of the future, he would take that test on this footing. He would assume that posterity would look upon the present proposals in the same way as that in which the present generation looked upon former struggles for religious equality against Church privilege and supremacy. Tried by none of these standards did he fear the censure which the right hon. Gentleman had passed upon the Bill. It was rather strange to hear proceeding from the right hon. Gentleman's mouth the objection that this Bill was piecemeal Disestablishment. Those who objected to Disestablishment at all would presumably prefer it piecemeal to wholesale. It might well be that those who wanted Disestablishment altogether should complain of what was, after all, only a small instalment of the concession of a great right. But there was some advantage in taking, by instalments, a concession which was open to great doubt and controversy. The experiment would prove the benefits arising from the application of the principle; and experiments had hitherto made many converts to the cause of Disestablishment. The vigour and energy of the Disestablished Church in Ireland; the activity of the non-Established Anglican Church in the United States; and the extraordinary strides of the non-Established Episcopalian Church of Scotland had made many converts to Disestablishment. He would not object to see the principle applied still further by instalments, and having won the cause of Disestablishment for the four Dioceses of Wales, one would next be quite reconciled to the proposal to apply the same principle to the Dioceses of the Northern Province of England. If the principle be a sound one, and if the principle be capable of graduated application, one failed to see any difficulty in the application he had indicated. The right hon. Gentleman told them that the pretence that Disestablishment would confer an advantage upon the Church was the merest cant. If that were true it was cant of which the right hon. Gentleman's political oppenents were not alone guilty; if it be mere cant, it was cant of which many of the most sincere and devoted adherents of the Church of England were guilty. He respectfully resented the accusation that an argument of that kind was an insincere argument arising from political exigencies, and was not attributable to a conscientious view of a great religious question. The right hon. Gentleman said this was a social grievance; and a social grievance which did not depend upon the official position of the Church, but upon the fact that she in wealth and culture excelled the Churches of Nonconformity. What was the answer to that contention? Did the right hon. Gentleman admit that the social schism caused by the presence of the Establishment could be bridged by equal culture or by equal wealth? Let him ask some of the cultured ministers of Nonconformity whether they had full and recognised equality with their fellow-clergymen of the Establishment? Did the right hon. Gentleman say that equal wealth would entirely efface this social schism? Let him ask the wealthy members of Nonconformist communities if they were not conscious of the estrangement, although social conditions, measured by wealth, were precisely equal. Let the right hon. Gentleman try another test. In places like Bath, Cheltenham, Leamington, and Brighton—places largely peopled by the retired well-to-do, and largely dominated by clerical influence; where, in all respects of wealth and culture, conditions were equal, would the right hon. Gentleman not find that this social schism existed? He challenged with confidence such an investigation. [Mr. CARSON: "What effect had it in Ireland?"] His hon. and learned Friend had more experience of Ireland than he could have. [Mr. CARSON: "There was not the slighest difference;" *and* Mr. MACNEILL: "Oh, oh!"] The hon. Member (Mr. MacNeill), who represented an Irish constituency, and who had a large knowledge of that country, differed diametrically from the hon. and learned Gentleman. At all events, he (Mr. Lawson Walton) knew enough of the social life of this country to accept for good or ill the test he had indicated. The right hon. Gentleman said that this was a trivial grievance. ["No!"] Well, at all events, a grievance of sentiment. It might be a grievance they could not measure by any financial scale or in any material sense, but if it be a grievance of sentiment it was none the less a grievance which statesmanship was bound to recognise and respect. It might be naturally said that such a line of observation involved a degree of blame being cast by the speaker upon the members of the Church of England. He would be sorry to cast the slightest reproach upon the Members of the Church of England of the generation in which they were living. The Acts of Uniformity had gone, and the Bills of Pains and Penalties had gone, but the social stigma they created in the relations between Church and Dissent still lingered, and although Parliament was not now giving effect to the views of the Church in this matter, the spirit which inspired that legislation was still living, and many of the members of the Church of England had their own mode of giving effectual expression to that spirit. If this social schism existed they were bound to do away with it. On what did it depend? It depended, and must depend mainly upon the connection existing between the Established Church and the State. The whole fabric of ecclesiastical exclusiveness and social supremacy was founded upon the State recognition of the Church. Until that foundation was removed there could never be that equality of social conditions between the various Churches of the country which he submitted was essential to a perfectly harmonious intercourse between every portion of the community of the country. He had one other observation to make before he left this matter. It had been suggested on the Opposite Benches that the only motive for this measure was the cupidity of the Welsh people; it was said to rest upon a wish to plunder the National Church in Wales, and to share the pelf which would follow Disestablishment. That argument was, curiously enough, destroyed by the very speakers who urged it. For instance, one hon. Member said that the individual advantage to the Welsh people consequent upon Disestablishment would be 1s. 8d. per head of the population. Then it was said that if they did not get the advantage in money they would have it in national institutions which appealed to the avaricious instincts of the people. What were the institutions that were to appeal to the greed of the Welsh people? They had been lured on by the prospects of museums, of hospitals, of nursing homes, and it was by such institutions conferring such great and alluring advantages to the advocates of this measure that Disestablishment was to be brought about. Such an argument had only to be stated in order to be covered with ridicule. But there was another motive—the only motive which could support a movement of this sort. The exceptional character of the movement had been pointed out by many speakers, and it was acknowledged by all. He doubted whether such a preponderance of the representation of any section of the country was ever found united in any common cause in an equal degree. A well-known thinker on political questions once formulated the proposition that you could never unite a great mass of a community, consisting of all classes, in favour of any one movement, except from a common sense of justice; and if they destroyed, as they must destroy, the suggested cupidity of the Welsh people to explain their action, they could only fall back upon this common bond of union throughout all classes of the population. They had, therefore, a common sense of justice in this case. What was the position then? Was it defensible in relation to the spiritual basis on which it rested? Had the administration of the spiritualities of the Welsh Church in regard to the Welsh people given her a ground from which she might appeal with confidence to the forbearance and consideration of the Welsh people. He could quite understand that, even if the position of the Church was indefensible on political grounds, they might still have a Church living for centuries depending upon the good-natured forbearance and indulgence of the people, who recognised the great services rendered to them through long periods of history. But that position was abandoned by the advocates of Establishment in Wales. It was stated that for long periods in the history of the Welsh Church her records were indefensible—that her services were neglected, that her ministers were either absentees, or pluralists, or profligates. Her altars were cold, and under that condition of things the Welsh Church lost to a great extent her hold upon the affections of the Welsh people. The bulk of the people grew up outside the pale of the Church, and created for themselves churches for the ministration of those spiritual wants which the Established Welsh Church neglected and ignored. In these circumstances how could hon. Members opposite appeal to the consideration and the forbearance of the Welsh people? It was admitted that the past history of the Church would not bear examination, but hon. Members opposite pointed to the future. [Several hon. MEMBERS: "To the present."] Well, to the present, as an earnest of future vitality, and he acknowledged that there were now signs in the Church in Wales of a revival of activity such as must, no doubt, give great encouragement to its adherents. But was this the hour for repentance and retrieval? Hon. Members on his side of the House thought that another hour had struck—the hour of retribution. It might be said that the history of the Church to which he had been alluding, was ancient history; but the ecclesiastical doctrine of retribution was that it handed on its legacy to the third and fourth generations. While a promise of future retrieval on the part of the Welsh Church might be given, still that Church must stand or fall on the judgment of its work in the past, and if the Welsh people asked that House to give them the remedy which the Bill accorded for generations of injustice and neglect he did not think the Liberal Party would fail to respond to the appeal.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) said, the Government knew quite well that this Bill would not pass into law—that there were other Members of the Constitution who would take good care that this great and signal injustice was not inflicted upon the Church in Wales. He sincerely hoped that would be the case. But he spoke there as a Member of the House of Commons, and he earnestly and sincerely appealed to hon. Gentlemen in all parts of the House to consider well before they did, on this occasion, what he thought they had done before on some other great occasions, abandon the exercise of their own independent judgment upon the ground that the Bill would be thrown out in the House of Lords. No doubt the Bill would be thrown out by the House of Lords, but they had nothing to do with what might happen in another place. They had to consider the Bill on its merits, but hon. Members opposite were entirely in error if they thought the friends of the Church came there as suppliants to defend her. In the exercise of her spiritual work in Wales the Church deserved well of the country; she was essential to the higher interests of the people of Wales and of England; and they were very far from admitting that she had failed in her duty. At one time no doubt, with other religious communities, and certainly with the Church in England, she was in a condition of less activity. But those times were passed in England as in Wales, and in Wales as in England. They, therefore, defended the Church, not as suppliants, but because they believed that, without the Church, Wales would fail to obtain that spiritual perfection which they hoped was in store for her. The hon. and learned Gentleman who had last spoken argued that it could not be said that the religious Endowments of the past could be maintained for the Church in Wales, because when the Endowments were made the Church was the only religious community, and, therefore, as other religious communities had since grown up the money ought no longer be left to the Church in Wales. That appeared to him to be a very amazing argument. If a rich man, who had no direct heir, left by will a large sum of money to his niece, and if after his death, the niece had a sister born, could it be argued that because the man had only one niece when he was alive, the money he left her ought to be divided between her and the niece who was born after his death? But the argument of the hon. and learned Member had no application to the Bill, because it was not proposed to divert the money of Wales to any religious uses at all. The Home Secretary had advanced the amazing argument that an academy of arts was a form of religion. He believed that argument was advanced at the spur of the moment, and that the right hon. Gentleman would not adhere to it in his calmer moments. Therefore, the whole of the argument of the hon. and learned Gentleman broke down. It was perfectly certain that the pious founder did not leave his money to establish academies of art in Wales, but that he left it for the more solemn purposes of the service of religion and the service of God; and to divert it to museums, allotments, and academies of art, on the ground that they were religious was a misuse of terms, of which the right hon. Gentleman himself must now be a little ashamed. The Home Secretary had adduced a large number of statistics in support of the proposals of the Bill. He was amazed that the Government could appeal to statistics at all after having resisted the proposal of a religious census. Of course, the real reason for the opposition to the religious census was that the Government were afraid of the result. The Home Secretary had said that the census would not be a fair test, because a great many people would put themselves down as Churchmen who were not Churchmen. But there was no real reason for believing that the people of Wales were intimidated. Indeed, he had heard that a certain amount of strong influence was exercised by the Nonconformist ministers. He did not complain of that, but he referred to it to show that the influence ascribed to the ministers of the Church of England, could be exercised in an equal degree, to say the least, by Nonconformists Ministers if a census were ordered. The Home Secretary quoted some statistics which he had derived from private sources.

*MR. ASQUITH: No; from the Bishop of St. Asaph.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said, the right hon. Gentleman's statistics were not derived entirely from that source; and what he had quoted from the Bishop of St. Asaph was not always correct. The right hon. Gentleman estimated the numbers of the Church of England in Wales by the communicants of the Church. That was a delicate subject to deal with; but hon. Members who had any knowledge of the actual facts of the Church of England, knew that an enormous number of persons made use of the services of the Church; attended the worship of the Church, and conformed in every way to the Church, and yet, partly from good motives, and partly from bad motives, were not Communicants. Were those people to be shut out from consideration when the question of the retention of the Church in Wales had to be decided? He said no, why should they? The Communicant test was altogether fallacious. He was told that there was not the same amount of solemnity or the same amount of awe attached to the Sacrament in the Nonconformists' Chapels as was in the Church of England, and, therefore, there was in Nonconformity a much less number of people than in the Church of England who thought themselves unworthy and unfit to partake of it. The Bishop of St. Asaph said that 47 per cent. of the electors voted for Disestablishment candidates and 27 per cent. against, and the conclusion which the right hon. Gentleman drew was that there was a majority in favour of Disestablishment.

*MR. ASQUITH: I said that was the conclusion which he apparently intended his readers to draw.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said, that was not so, and he thought, in justice to the Bishop of St. Asaph, he ought to point that out. The Bishop of St. Asaph, after saying that 47 per cent. voted for Disestablishment candidates, added that that could not be described as practical unanimity. That was very different from what the right hon. Gentleman said—— [*Cries of* "Read on."] He did not mind reading on. The Bishop continued by saying that on the other hand the number of those who recorded their votes for Establishment candidates, together with those who did not go to the poll, numbered 53 per cent. of the electorate. The fact remained that only 47 per cent. of the registered voters in Wales had recorded their votes for Disestablishment candidates, and that was the only conclusion which could be drawn. It was as plain as a pikestaff. Turning to the question of resident ministers, it was rather a curious thing that when he asked a question about resident Nonconformist ministers last Session, the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think it was of very small importance; but now, it seemed, he had changed his opinion. When he asked the question last Session the right hon. Gentleman said he had no means of ascertaining the facts. He had now found some means of ascertaining them.

*MR. ASQUITH: I got my figures again from the Bishop of St. Asaph.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said, the right hon. Gentleman evidently entirely trusted the Bishop. He thought it would have been far more satisfactory, though personally he had every confidence in the Bishop's figures, if the right hon. Gentleman had found out these facts officially. He had, on the former occasion he had referred to, put the following supplementary question to the right hon. Gentleman: "Would it be an exaggeration to say that in half the parishes in Wales there is no resident Nonconformist minister?" the right hon. Gentleman said he believed it would be a great advantage if there were. It turned out that the figures that were quoted, so far from being an exaggeration, were under the mark. There were 1,081 parishes in Wales, and, according to the right hon. Gentleman, there were 500 of them in which there were no resident ministers.

*MR. ASQUITH said, the figures he had quoted were from the Bishop of St. Asaph, who only obtained his returns from 1,016 out of 1,081 parishes. He had assumed the figures to be accurate.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said, that at any rate there were, as nearly as possible, half of the parishes in Wales which had no resident Nonconformist ministers, and that appeared to him to be of capital importance. The right hon. Gentleman said he thought itinerant ministers were as good. Of course there were very small parishes in Wales within a short distance of each other which were served by one clergyman. The Bishop of St. Asaph said that at the present time the Church provided for every parish in Wales a resident minister; and that even in the case of small benefices held in plurality the law provided that the distance between the churches should not exceed three miles, and that there were in his own diocese only one or two instances of benefices held in plurality. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not in future try to induce the House of Commons to believe that the Church in Wales was in any material degree unprovided with sufficient resident ministers to do the pastoral work. He did not know if the right hon. Gentleman had ever really considered of what enormous importance the resident pastoral work was, but did he suppose that an itinerant minister could be the almsgiver of the parish, the visitor of the sick, and the comforter of the dying? In every one of these 500 parishes throughout Wales, but for the services of the Church which they were attacking and the existence of these resident ministers, the unfortunate people would be entirely without pastoral care. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] If there were any moderate Liberationists sitting opposite who thought that by Disestablishing and Disendowing the Church in Wales after the manner proposed in this Bill they would arrive at some kind of tranquility in this religious question they were very much mistaken. There were many particulars in which the right hon. Gentleman had shown more moderation than many of his extreme followers would have had him show. He did not himself say that the movement for Disestablishment was largely due to the cupidity of the Welsh people, but he thought the motives of a great number of persons interested in it, if not dictated by cupidity, were dictated by envy and a certain jealousy of the position of the parish clergyman of the Establishment. Anybody who listened to the hon. and learned Gentleman must have been convinced that that was the motive which was present to his mind throughout the whole of his speech, and that he felt there was an injustice in the superior position which clergymen occupied in the parishes of Wales. Were they going to destroy the position of the clergyman by this Bill? He doubted it. They would not destroy his position immediately. There were the life interests of the clergymen; there were the edifices they had built and the parish Church in Wales would still be the Church belonging to this one denomination. The Disestablishment of the Church in Wales was quite evidently only the first step towards the Disestablishment of the Church in England. That was not concealed by hon. Gentlemen on the back Benches opposite; it was hardly concealed by right hon. Gentlemen themselves. Now that the right hon. Member for Midlothian was no longer leading the Party opposite, it was clear they looked to nothing but the ultimate Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in England. By this Bill, therefore, they were not approaching the end of this question, but were opening up long years of struggle upon religious and ecclesiastical issues which would end in the complete maintenance of the Church and the defeat of those who were opposed to it. But such a struggle must occupy the time of Parliament and the mind of the country to the exclusion of almost everything else. He desired to say one word about the reasons which had been put forward by the supporters of this Bill in favour of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church. He observed that the right hon. Gentleman said a great deal more about Disestablishment than he did about Disendowment. He was not surprised at that. He believed that Establishment was an advantageous system both to the State and people, but Disendowment involved far more even than Disestablishment, and it would be a crying injustice if the property of the Church which those who preferred her services held inviolably to be her property was to be taken from her. The Church in Wales was attacked for two separate and inconsistent reasons, one that it was national and the other that it was not national. He would deal with the latter reason first. The right hon. Gentleman had said it was an alien Church. He could not make out how hon. Gentlemen opposite put up with Christianity at all. Why, it was not even European. Was it not obvious even to the mind of the most extreme Liberationist that all Churches were in that sense alien? The right hon. Gentleman, the President of the Board of Trade, seemed to think that the Church ought to be national, and there was quite a poetical passage in his speech the other night in which he spoke of the Welsh people, their separate language and customs. He thought the right hon. Gentleman said the Welsh had mountains, and this fact seemed in the right hon. Gentleman's mind to constitute a special privilege to their having a National Church. But were the Welsh the only people who had a special language and mountains? Take the Highlands of Scotland. Did the Highlands of Scotland put forward any claim to have a special National Church separate from the National Church of the rest of Scotland? And yet the Highlanders had certainly a separate language, special customs, and most delightful mountains. He confessed he thought this claim to have a National Church because of the mountains was rather an exaggeration. Again, the inhabitants of Wales did not all speak the Welsh language but English. Not only was this so but a large number of the inhabitants were Anglo-Saxon by descent. One hon. Member had, that evening, made a most extraordinary use of statistics. He said that the Welsh speaking people were in a large majority, and the way the hon. Member made this out was this: He took the people speaking Welsh only, and those who spoke both English and Welsh, and adding the two together he said there were more people in Wales who spoke Welsh than there were who spoke English. As a matter of fact, there was a very large number of monoglot English in Wales, and in their case the whole argument of the President of the Board of Trade broke down because they would have no title on the grounds of separate customs or separate language to a National Church. Then there was the other argument used by the supporters of this Bill, who said that the Church in Wales ought to be Disestablished because it was national. They said that what was national belonged to the nation, that therefore the nation had a right to do what it liked with it, and that, a Liberal Government being in power, the Church ought to be Disestablished. That, he thought, was a most extraordinary misuse of terms. It was perfectly true that the Church was national, but that did not constitute a reason for its Disestablishment and Disendowment. What was precisely the position of a National Church? It served a great national purpose. It was a corporation or number of corporations, with special laws and some—very few—privileges. It was in a special way under the control of Parliament, and the whole public had rights in it. It all these senses it stood in a special position, and people seemed to think that for this very reason it ought to be Disestablished and Disendowed. Was it the only great corporation in England standing in that position? To compare small things with great, let them take a railway company. That served a great national purpose; it had special laws, special privileges: it was under the control of Parliament, and Parliament often interfered with its methods, and altered the law by which it was governed, and the whole public had a right to use the line. Was this a reasonable ground for confiscating the property of the shareholders? A railway company might be said to be private property. But on what principles was private property more sacred than Church property? In a great crisis of a man's life—when he was dying—which was most sacred to him, his private property or the consolations of his religion? What did the Home Secretary mean by saying that public rights in connection with the Church in Wales were to be maintained? Was the right of every subject of the Queen to enter the parish church and of parishioners to appeal to a certain ecclesiastical court with regard to misfeasance in matters of ritual to be maintained? Would all the parishioners have the right to elect churchwardens after the passing of the Act as before? Clause 15 said the representative body might be elected by the Bishops, clergy, and laity of the Church. What were the laity of the Church in Wales?

*MR. ASQUITH: The Clause follows exactly the precedent of the Irish Church Act.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: The Irish Church Act was preceded by a religious census, a preliminary which seemed to have been omitted in the present case. It would be extremely difficult for the Home Secretary to arrive at what the laity of the Church were. In the Debate on the religious census the objection made to the census in England was that every member, even of the Nonconformist bodies, would put himself down as a member of the Church of England, because every subject of the Queen was a member of the Church of England. That was the view expressed by Mr. Picton, then a prominent representative of Nonconformity in this House. Who were to be the laity who would have the control of the representative body? The Bill provided a way out of the difficulty. "Her Majesty" in this case would mean the Home Secretary. He would be the Minister who would advise the granting of the charter under which this representative body would be constituted. What he proposed was, first, to Disestablish the Church and then himself to decide who should constitute the laity. This was one of the points on which something would have to be said if ever they got into Committee. A good deal was said about the trammels, chains and fetters which were supposed to hang around the Church. Was it true that there were chains and fetters? It was said "Oh, you cannot change your doctrine or your ritual without the leave of Parliament." But did they want to change doctrine or ritual? The doctrines of the Church were constant and did not change; and, as far as they could, they desired that the ritual should be constant too. Moreover, if the right hon. Gentleman would study "The Case for Disestablishment," published by the Liberation Society, he would find that in the course of the last century many fetters and chains had been struck off. Personally he admitted that he was astonished to find how many useful measures had been passed by Parliament during half a century on ecclesiastical subjects and to promote the better government of the Church. He was sorry for the author of the "Case," because, after eloquently denouncing one evil after another, he had to append footnotes stating that what had been wrong had been set right. Between 1832 and 1882 there were as many as 229 Acts of Parliament relating to Church affairs. That was at the rate of four a year. They included such subjects and measures as pluralities, on which there were several Acts of a useful kind; the creation of new bishoprics; the resignation of Bishops when they were past work; cathedrals, as to which many evils had been remedied; Sir R. Peel's Act to provide for the spiritual provision of large parishes; and the Clergy Discipline Act of the last Parliament, which was loyally supported by the right hon. Member for Midlothian. Other measures might yet be required; and there was one as to which in the present Session he hoped he should not appeal in vain to the public spirit and real religious feeling of the House. He would not enter into all the measures that were necessary to be passed, but there were many for the better government of the Church which would be with little trouble assented to by the justice of this Parliament, even by those who did not agree with Churchmen in religious matters. The fact was, a great revival had taken place in the Church, not in Wales alone, but just as much in England. This revival was started about half a century ago in the great Oxford movement, which gradually extended itself to all parts of the country. That great revival had called into being a most fervent and earnest Church sentiment, and in face of that he did not think the Home Secretary and his colleagues had any conception of the work they had undertaken. They had passed from purely political matters, and had come down to this question upon which the people really cared deeply. The sentiment was not confined to any class or Party; it had got such a hold in every parish throughout the country that the right hon. Gentleman would find his task exceedingly hard. There was not a parish, there was not a cottage where the clergyman visited, there was not a family which had had occasion to value the ministry of the Church, that would not resent the attack that was being made upon it. God forbid that the Church should ever become a political engine, or belong to a political Party; but if it were attacked it would, of course, defend itself; and the result could be but one—it could end in nothing but defeat of the attack and the ejection from power of the Government that leant upon it.

MR. HERBERT PAUL (Edinburgh, S.) said, he was sure the Church of England, in Wales and out of it, had every reason to be grateful for the championship of the noble Lord. He knew very well the intensity of the feelings of those whom, in this matter, the noble Lord represented, and in everything he said he should endeavour to show for those sentiments the respect he sincerely felt. He was glad the noble Lord did not follow the example of another noble Lord who had addressed the House in the Debate, and anticipate his removal to another place, which they all trusted might be long delayed, by telling them authoritatively what would happen to the Bill when it got there. The noble Lord the Member for Rochester addressed himself to the House of Commons, and he should address himself to that audience, and no other. The noble Lord would excuse him for saying that he appeared to be a little in doubt as to the identity of the Church of England, for at one time he compared it to a railway company, and at another time confused it with Christianity. He reminded him of the Rev. Mr. Thwackem, who said:—

> "When I say religion, I mean the Christian religion, and when I say the Christian religion, I mean the Protestant religion, and when I say the Protestant religion, I mean the religion of the Church of England."

Might he turn to a speech which—and he hoped the noble Lord would not think him discourteous for saying so—was more important, the speech of the right hon. Baronet who moved the rejection of the Bill. The right hon. Baronet, referring to the statement of his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, that he believed the result of this Bill would be beneficial to the Church herself, described it as political cant of the most nauseous kind. He thought it was as well that the right hon. Baronet should know that there were men who were as much members of the Church of England as he was, who seriously believed that the result of severing the connection between Church and State would be found more beneficial to the Church than to the State. He was rather interested in the description the right hon. Baronet gave of the sentiments of his right hon. Friend, because he remembered that those sentiments were uttered by another right hon. Gentleman with whom the right hon. Baronet was in closer political agreement than he was with the Home Secretary. It was not very long since the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham wrote a letter in which he expressed the opinion that the result of Disestablishment in Wales would be to make the Church stronger, healthier, and more vigorous. The right hon. Baronet had aimed at one object and hit another. The right hon. Gentleman would doubtless remember the old Greek story of the man who threw a stone at a dog and killed his mother-in-law, and remarked that it was a fortunate act. The right hon. Baronet asked, what was Disestablishment? He did not reply that the State Church was the creature of adulterous, nay, of incestuous birth, though that was the language of one of the greatest men who ever sat in that House—Mr. Bright; but he thought it was important that they should remember that what they were discussing was not the Church, but the partnership of the State and the Church, and in that partnership there must be a predominant partner. The right hon. Baronet thought that it was possible at this time of day to make the State subordinate to the Church. The only alternative was that the Church should be made subordinate to the State. With regard to the Church in Wales, the right hon. Baronet had enunciated three propositions, first, that Wales was not a nation; second, that that region had a national Church; and third, that that National Church, belonging to a place that was not a nation, were part and parcel of the Church of England. He was not a metaphysician or a theologian, and he was unable to reconcile those three propositions. He held quite contrary views which were, at any rate, consistent. He held that Wales was a nation, that the Church of England in Wales was not a National Church, and that although it was now ecclesiastically part of the Church of England, and would remain in spiritual communion with the Church of England after the passing of this Bill, it was expedient that the legal part of its connection with the Church of England should cease. The admission made by the right hon. Baronet that certain advantages had resulted from the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland was remarkable, coming from such a quarter, for there was no stauncher opponent of the proposal to Disestablish the Irish Church than the right hon. Gentleman himself. If he mistook not, after the Bill for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church had become law, and when the Conservative Party returned to power, the right hon. Gentleman said that it would be desirable to restore the Church of England in Ireland.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH said that the hon. Member was in error.

MR. HERBERT PAUL, of course, accepted the right hon. Gentleman's correction. At all events, the right hon. Gentleman admitted now that advantages had accrued to Ireland from the severence of the connection between Church and State in that country. The right hon. Baronet had referred to the political motives which he alleged actuated the supporters of this Bill. But what would be the result of passing the Bill into law? Would it be to strengthen the Liberal Party in Wales? For his part, he did not believe that the enormous majority of ten to one that supported Disestablishment in Wales presented the normal strength of the Liberal Party in Wales, and he was of opinion that from a purely Party point of view the passing of this Bill would be a disadvantage and not a benefit to the Government that had brought the measure forward. The right hon. Baronet's speech showed that he had formed a curious misconception as to the real reason of the unpopularity of tithes. He assumed that the grievance was that the tithes were not paid for the maintenance of Nonconformist churches. [Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: "Excuse me, I was quoting the Home Secretary."] At any rate, the right hon. Gentleman put an interpretation on the words of the Home Secretary which he understood that his right hon. Friend repudiated. [Mr. ASQUITH: "Hear, hear."] He understood that the feelings of Nonconformists were, as a matter of fact, entirely repugnant to the acceptance of public money for the purposes of their own religion. The grievance was not that tithes were not paid to Nonconformists, but that Nonconformists had to pay tithes for a Church to which they did not belong. The right hon. Baronet had quoted from an old will a very curious curse, which the testator thought, and he was afraid hoped, would rest upon anybody who should divert what this testator called "The property of God." It was very much to be regretted that language of that kind should be referred to, not by the right hon. Gentleman who quoted it, but by inferior disputants in this controversy. Such language, he ventured to describe, as language of blasphemous imbecility. This talk about the property of the Deity, and about robbing the Deity was language for which he could not find sufficiently strong epithets. Whilst the right hon. Baronet was quoting those words there sat beside him the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, who was instrumental in the passing of a Bill to which such words as "robbery from God" ought to apply, if language of that kind could ever be really applied to any act of theirs. The Duke of Devonshire had also a part in passing that measure. Did he deserve to have such language applied to him? Then the Marquis of Salisbury voted, he believed, for the Second Reading of the Bill in the House of Lords. Did the right hon. Baronet think that this language ought to be used with reference to Lord Salisbury? He supported the Bill now before the House on the broad principle of religious equality, the principle that the State ought to be absolutely impartial and neutral between all religious bodies in the land. They were taunted with not consenting to a religious census in Wales, and he would give the House three reasons why he thought such a census would not be useful or desirable. The first was that it would be irrelevant, because what they wanted to ascertain was how many people desired the Church to be Disestablished. There were, he believed, many Churchmen in Wales in favour of Disestablishment, and he dared say some Nonconformists opposed to it. The second reason was that it would be misleading, for as long as there was an Endowed Church with special rights and privileges people who were indifferent to all religions and who had no particular religious opinions of their own, would readily subscribe themselves members of the Church of England. His third reason was that it was inquisitorial. It was a question which the State had no right to ask, and which every good citizen had the right to refuse to answer. It had been said that you had as much right to maintain an Established Church as a standing Army. That was a proposition from which he respectfully dissented. A standing Army was kept up for the benefit of all classes; an Established Church was kept up for the benefit of members of a particular denomination. As a clinching argument, it was said that the Church in Wales was part of the Church of England. Precisely the same argument was used when the right hon. Member for Midlothian proposed to Disestablish the Irish Church. On that occasion the Duke of Rutland, then Lord John Manners, said there was no such thing as the Church of Ireland, and that great Constitutional authority was right. For what were the words of the 5th Article of the Act of Union?

> "The Churches of England and Ireland as now by law established shall be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to be called the United Church of England and Ireland."

Therefore, the Disestablishment of the Irish Church was a precedent for the Disestablishment of what was by Law and the Constitution part and parcel of the Church of England. In reading Lord Selborne's book on "The Defence of the Church of England," the conclusion at which he arrived was, that in the judgment of that great authority, there was no national Church at all, that there were a number of small corporations dotted up and down the country, "corporations sole" they were called by lawyers, "parsons" they were termed by laymen, who held property that was as much their own as the hat he wore was his. And he observed this peculiarity in these controversies—that when one proposed to Disestablish the Church, it it was always a national institution, but when one proposed to Disendow the Church it was always a private corporation. Tithes, it was said by the late Mr. W. H. Smith, were national property.

*Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, that as the hon. Member appealed to him, he must say that Mr. W. H. Smith afterwards explained that he did not use the expression in the sense attributed to him.

Mr. PAUL said, he quoted Mr. Smith as authority for a plain proposition. Tithes, no doubt, were intended for the religious purposes of the whole nation; but, unfortunately, there were no longer any religious purposes which were common to the whole nation. The noble Lord, the Member for Rochester, was extremely sarcastic about the idea of art galleries having anything to do with religion. He was not going to inflict on the House a lecture on the works of Mr. Ruskin, but he would like to ask whether lunatic asylums were more a part of religion than art galleries, because Lord Salisbury undoubtedly voted for the Bill which took away the property of the Irish Church and applied it, among other purposes, to the maintenance of lunatic asylums. They had been told in the Debate, and in stronger language outside, that in favour of the Bill were rallied the forces of Atheism and Infidelity. That was an easy thing to say, but history did not show that Freethinkers, or even Atheists, were hostile to ecclesiastical establishments. Very much the reverse. Gibbon was a great defender of the Established Church of England, and he showed his reverence for it by calling it his dear mamma. It was a very favourite opinion among men hostile to religion that religious establishments kept religion in its proper place—in the words of a former Archbishop of Canterbury they kept down the enthusiasm. There were two principles, one of which, consciously or not, every man must hold on this subject. The one was the voluntary principle, of which they on that side of the House were for the most part the exponents; the other was the Erastian principle, of which he made a present to the High Churchmen on the other side. Either religion was wholly and absolutely independent of the State and of mundane anthorities, or it was subject to and controlled by these authorities. In the words of a very great philosopher, who gave a very terse definition and a very striking contrast:

> "Superstitution is tales and fables disallowed by the authorities; religion allowed."

They were told that Bills of this kind—attacks on the property of the Church, were a scandal to religion. Were there no scandals under the present arrangements? Was the sale of the right to present to the cure of souls not a scandal? When he heard objections to the small amount of compensation allowed under the Bill, he remembered that the measure introduced last Session by the hon. Member for North Islington took away the right of selling the next presentation, which was usually the only part a private individual could sell at all, without a penny of compensation. Was there no scandal to the Church in the judgments of Lord Westbury? Was there no scandal to the Church in the bringing before a secular tribunal questions of the most sacred kind? They had seen in recent years even the very elements of the Sacrament submitted to a Court of Law and handled by counsel and witnesses. Was there no scandal in the Dean and Chapter meeting after a solemn religious service and going through the form and the farce of electing a Bishop—a father in God—who was the nominee of the Minister of the day—a man who might be of any or no religion, provided only he was not a Roman Catholic? He was very much struck with an expression in the speech of the hon. Member for St. Albans, who said, "We now have a Disestablishment by the grace of Lord Rosebery." Was that the principle which was set up in opposition to this attempt to free religion for the control of the State. Lord Salisbury said the other day that if the Bill passed the consequence would be that many districts in Wales would be left without pastoral supervision and spiritual assistance. As a member of the Church he repudiated that as a scandal. He did not believe that the richest religious body in the world would fall so far short of its duty as that. Where is the Church strongest now? In the towns, where to all intents and purposes, it is a voluntary body dependent on the contributions of its members. The Duke of Westminster was busily engaged in getting up a fund to fight the next Election in Wales. If, instead of sending round the hat, the Duke of Westminster would put his hand into his pocket he could relieve the necessities of all the poor clergy in Wales without feeling it. Welsh Churchmen were deterred now from doing their duty by the fact that the interests of the Church are provided for at the public expense. So far from the passing of the Bill resulting in a triumph for Nonconformity, it would, in his opinion, result in the death of Nonconformity, for the vicious would then be the only enemies of the Church, and the result would be a triumph for the Church itself. Churches were not strongest where they were endowed. Was the Roman Catholic Church stronger in France, where she was endowed, or in Ireland, where she was not? In conclusion he ventured to state to the House these two propositions as confirmed by the judgment of history and supported by reason—first, that religion never leant with immunity upon the secular arm; and that a State Church had never without injury attempted to curtail the religious liberties or to violate the religious equality of any nation in the world.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, that the Home Secretary in his speech dwelt on the points which were strongly in his favour and passed over very lightly the more sordid and grosser parts of his scheme. The right hon. Gentleman was angry because of the use of the word "cant." According to Webster's Dictionary that word meant "empty, solemn speech implying what is not felt." That definition did apply very much to what the Home Secretary stated. The point of the word "cant," as applied to him, was that, while despoiling the Church in Wales of her property, he spoke as if he was benefiting her. That was properly termed "cant." He would illustrate it by the reverse mode of argument. Suppose that the Conservative party were preposing some plan whereby a great Nonconformist community was to be deprived of its endowments, and in support of the proposal were to put forward the argument that that community would be benefited by being relieved of the burden of its property, the Home Secretary and his Friends would describe that as Tory cant. Why, then, should the word not also apply in the present case? He went with the Home Secretary in his historical argument right down to the 19th century, when it was true that the Church played her cards badly; but in the middle of the 19th century he was obliged to part company with the right hon. Gentleman. There could be no doubt if left to herself the Church in a generation or two would win over the vast majority of the Welsh people to her fold. How came it, then, that this was the time chosen for her Disestablishment? How came it that at the time she was gaining ground in every direction she was to be deprived of her advantages? And she was to be disestablished not for any faults committed now or in this generation, but for something that went wrong during the last century, and for this she was to be deprived of her ancient property at a time when she was regaining her old position. What was the nature of the measures to be undertaken? She was not only to be disestablished, she was to be robbed of all her property. There was one point with which the Home Secretary had not attempted to grapple. The Church was a Corporation. A Corporation could own property. The tithe and the endowments were the property of the Church. To take the property from her by force of law was to commit a legislative wrong. There was no greater instance of public plunder by Act of Parliament. Then, further, if this was the property of the Church it was the property of a sacred body. To rob sacred property was sacrilege. Thus, they got by steps which could not be refuted to this conclusion, that the present measure was nothing short of public plunder and sacrilege. The Home Secretary made merry over the statistical arguments of the Bishop of St. Asaph's. The Bishop was quite as intellectual a man as the Home Secretary, and it might be that his contentions was not so weak as the Home Secretary seemed to suppose. Those who voted for Disestablishment were only 47 per cent. of the whole, and it might be assumed that they were the most aggressive, whereas of the 53 per cent. there would be many quiet people who would not take the trouble to vote, but who if roused would vote against Disestablishment. He thought that was a fair assumption, and he firmly believed it to be the case. Knowing this to be the case they could understand why there was an unwillingness on the part of the promoters of the Bill to go to the plain statistical test of a religious census.

It being Twelve o'clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Bill read 2°.

Sir R. Temple

RULE OF THE ROAD AT SEA.

On the Order for the Adjourned Debate on the Motion for the appointment of a Select Committee on this subject,

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) objected.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. J. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.) said it had been brought to his knowledge that the hon. Member had two Amendments down, and he thought it might be worth while asking the hon. Member to withdraw one, and to accept a proposition in regard to the other.

*Mr. SPEAKER said, that the right hon. Gentleman had already exhausted his right of speech on this Motion.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he would move the Adjournment to give the right hon. Gentleman the right to speak.

Mr. BRYCE said, that one of the hon Member's Amendments referred to the screening of sidelights, as to which a Departmental Committee was sitting; and the other brought in the sound signals prescribed by Article 15 and Article 28 of the Revised Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. Would the hon. Member accept an Amendment to the Motion of the hon. Member for West Perthshire, providing for the inclusion in the reference of any objection which might be taken to Rule 15 in respect of fog signals as prescribed by Article 28? That would achieve the hon. Member's object, and he hoped the hon. Member would accept the proposal, withdrawing his amendment in respect of sidelights.

Mr. T. G. BOWLES said that he recognised the conciliatory spirit of the right hon. Gentleman, and was very much inclined to agree to his proposal, because he did not want this question to be hung up. But the proposal did not entirely meet his views, and he must ask the right hon. Gentleman to put it down again for Monday, in order that he might consider whether he could accept it.

Order deferred till Monday next.

House adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 22nd March, 1895.

THE MANNING OF THE NAVY.

Lord BRASSEY, in calling attention to the manning of the Navy, and the state of the Naval Reserves, said: At a time when a great national effort is being made to provide for the security of the Empire, my noble Friend who so ably directs the business of the Admiralty will, perhaps, welcome an opportunity of personally explaining his policy on a subject so important as the manning of the Navy. In 10 years we have doubled the tonnage of our Fleet. The additions we are making to our ships have called for an increase in the men. Thus far we have made additions chiefly to the permanent force. While fully recognising the necessity for those additions, and glad that Parliament has readily voted them, my object to-day is to press that the reinforcements of the future shall be raised more largely through a well-trained and effective Reserve. My proposals are briefly these: To raise the Naval Reserve to 50,000 men—20,000 in the first-class, 20,000 in second, and 10,000 firemen; the first-class men to be entered as boys, passing after five years in the Navy into the Reserve; the second-class to be recruited as at present, but to serve one or two years in the Navy; all seamen in the Reserve to go through an annual course of drill as at present. The conditions of service in the Reserve should be revised. The men should be liable for temporary service in the Navy in peace. I leave all details to the consideration of a Departmental Committee. As a groundwork for a short statement in support of this scheme a few statistics may be quoted. In 1885 I had the honour of moving the Navy Estimates in the House of Commons. The total force then voted for the Fleet, including Marines and Coastguard, was 59,000. The numbers proposed for 1895–6 are 88,850, or an increase of more than 11,000 men in the last two years. Meanwhile, the Naval Reserve has been raised from 19,000 to 25,000 men. Expenditure has grown proportionately. In the 10 years 1885–95 the Votes for pay and provisions have increased from £4,116,166 to £6,021,137, to which must be added in future years possibly £1,000,000 for pensions. In France, where more dependence is placed on Reserves for manning the Fleet, the Votes for pay and victualling show a trifling increase from £2,617,320 in 1885 to £2,640,146 for 1894. Comparisons cannot fairly be made between the cost of manning a fleet by conscription and by voluntary enlistment; but it is a circumstance to be noted that, while our expenditure has largely increased, the French has remained practically stationary. The inference may be drawn that the French have full confidence in the elasticity and the efficiency of their system of manning handed down from the great Administration of Colvert. From the dawn of history until now, as Captain Robinson has shown in his admirable work on the British Navy lately published, every maritime Power has followed the plan of providing for the expansion of its Navy from a peace to a war footing by means of Reserves. No country has ever maintained afloat in peace the numbers required in war. The reason is obvious. Such a policy would involve an enormous expenditure, not only on pay, provisions, and pensions, but in the maintenance in commission of ships to give the practice at sea which is essential. If men remain too long in harbour they lose their sea habits. For the purpose I have in view I do not wish, nor would it be consistent with facts, to speak in a despairing tone of our position. Our ability to raise our continuous service men to any strength which might be thought desirable is undoubted. Our stationary training-ships are always full, and the experiment of the *Northampton* as a sea-going training-ship appears entirely successful. For the demands of peace the Admiralty have full numbers at their disposal. No less than 21,000 men were embarked for the manœuvres of last year, besides upwards of 500 Naval Reserve, and yet our resources were not exhausted. We may have been short of officers; we were not short of men. When, however, we turn from manœuvres to a great struggle, possibly with a combination of Powers, every proposal which I desire to press. I will deal briefly with the officers of the Reserve. In the Royal Navy there is an admitted deficiency in the lieutenants' list. To make an efficient Naval officer is the work of years. To raise the number of lieutenants to the standard equal to the demands of war would be a great mistake. They could not receive promotion or be sufficiently exercised at sea. Our mercantile marine is the only available resource, and, well used, it would give us an enormous advantage over other Powers whose navies have not behind them the vast sea service created by British maritime enterprise. It is the less necessary to dwell on this branch of the manning question, important as it is, because it has recently been examined by a Departmental Committee, by whose recommendations the Admiralty will certainly be guided, rather than by anything which might come from an outside source. In conclusion, I have only to say once more that, in making these observations, I have nothing to offer in the nature of criticism of the steps which have been taken under the advice of the able and distinguished officers now serving on the Board at Whitehall. But I cannot believe that it is sound to go forward through the next ten years on the lines which have been followed in the last ten years. I repeat my hearty approval of what has been done; but to add 30,000 more men to the permanent force of the Navy would, I believe be a misapplication of the public money. I would much prefer an efficient Reserve raised to 50,000. If we train our reserve as the French, the Russians, and the Germans train theirs, by passing every seaman through the fleet, as we are now passing their officers, they will be more efficient than at present. Having a reliable Reserve the growth of expenditure on a continuous service force might be checked. The money so saved would be available for cruisers, works, coaling stations, and many other services. Do what we may in the work of national defence, something must be less perfect than we could wish. It is not the least of the arguments in support of a policy of strengthening the Reserve that it affords the means of improving our vast merchant service. In an age in which we seem fated to see, on every side, legions of men standing idle under arms, is it not a consideration to which statesmen should attach some weight that our Naval reserve, while ready to obey their country's call, will be able to give their lives to peaceful and useful employment.

*LORD HOOD OF AVALON said that this question of manning the Navy and the state of our Naval Reserves was one of the most important in connection with the maintenance of the command of the sea by the British Empire in the time of war, for in the event of any emergency ocurring which might necessitate putting forth the full strength of the Navy it would then be of little avail that we might have spent millions in building a large number of the very best vessels of all classes—if at the same time we had not provided the necessary number of officers and trained men to fight in them. Hence the extreme necessity of watching very carefully our requirements and resources in order to man all available vessels in case of emergency, not only at the present time, but three years hence when the whole of the vessels now building and those that had been provided for in the Estimates for the present year would have been completed. In his speech last year, when dealing with our requirements and resources, he stated that our total requirements of officers and men to man the whole of the available ships at the end of 1894 was approximately 91,000, of whom about 6,100 were officers, and about 84,900 men; that, with regard to officers, we were fairly well off for captains, commanders, and engineers, but that there was a serious deficiency of 390 lieutenants, and as to available active seamen there was approximately a deficiency of 22,400. His noble Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty, replying to his speech, said the figures he had quoted were mere conjecture. He asserted that they were not mere conjecture, but based on many calculations which he fully belied to be accurate. During last year some 6,700 men were provided, in which number were included some 800 seamen whom it was proposed to take from the merchant service and enter in the Navy. That experiment had turned out, as he knew it would, to be a complete failure. Who could expect men who had been for years in the Merchant Service, receiving high pay and under lax control, to join the

Navy, where the pay would be much lower and they would be subject to strict discipline? We obtained only 50 men of the 800 desired. For many years our seamen had been recruited solely from our own boys, who entered upon training at 15½ or 16, and who, after 18 months' very careful training, were sent to ships at sea, and at 18 were rated as Ordinary Seamen. The system had succeeded excellently, and he was informed there was not the slightest difficulty in obtaining any number of most satisfactory boys of both good character and good physique. At present we wanted to enter more boys to take the place of deficient seamen. Our training-ships were full, and the simplest course was to have another boys' training-ship, for which he was glad to see that provision was made in this year's Estimates. It was stated in the Estimates that 6,223 had been added to the Navy during last year. This would reduce the deficiency, according to his calculation, which was 22,400 in March last, approximately to 16,000 at the present time. But we should require in three years a very large addition of officers and men to provide for all the vessels now building; and for those provided for in this year's Estimates we should require an addition of about 220 lieutenants, about 215 engineer officers, and approximately 16,000 seamen. The addition of lieutenants and engineers was a very difficult question to deal with. It was remitted to a Committee, presided over by Admiral Sir Anthony Hoskins, than whom no better Member could have been selected; the Committee's Report was now under the consideration of the Admiralty and the Treasury, and he trusted that it would suggest some practical remedy for the deficiency. Whatever it recommended, we ought to offer every inducement to the officers of the Naval Reserve to serve one year in our Fleet and to go through a course of gunnery and torpedo instruction, which would greatly increase the value of their services if ever they were called out in an emergency. In view of the existing deficiency, he entirely concurred in the proposed increase in the number of cadets in the *Britannia* and in the increase of the cadetships allotted to the *Worcester* and the *Conway* training ships, and in the addition made to that valuable class, the warrant-officers of the Navy. Having put down the existing deficiency at 16,000 men, and having estimated that 16,000 would be required for the vessels now building or to be built, he made the total deficiency in the next three years 32,000 men. Our resources in Reserve consisted of from 7,000 to 8,000 Naval Pensioners, of whom we might possibly find 2,000 or 2,500 still fit for sea service, and about 24,000 Royal Naval Reserve men, very many of whom were always absent from the country, in the service of the Mercantile Marine, so that if an emergency occurred we should probably not obtain more than about 7,000 at once. If we were to provide for the manning of all our vessels in an emergency, a very large increase must be made during the next three years in the numbers of both Active Service and Reserve men. In addition to the 5,450 men who were to be provided this year, there should be an annual addition of 6,800 Active Service men in 1896 and 1897, and these additions would give an approximate total of 19,000 men. In the Reserve he should propose to increase the First-class Reserve to 15,000, the Second-class to 11,500, and the stokers to 3,500, making a total of 30,000. These were the very smallest additions that would enable us to provide for manning the vessels building and to be built. He was sorry to see that no addition had been made to the Marines, because, now that masts and sails were done away with, we specially required trained gunners; and in the Marines we could obtain trained gunners in half the time and at half the cost of training boys until they became Ordinary Seamen at 18. The boy cost the country £102; and the marine recruit joined the force as a man, and in 14 months had completed his training and was ready to embark as a gunner, and cost the country £48. The Marines had always been a very valuable addition to the Navy *personnel*; wherever and whenever they had been on active service they had distinguished themselves; and if their number were raised gradually from 15,500 to 19,000, the addition would be a great benefit to the Naval Service. He much regretted the total omission of battleships from the new programme; this programme comprised 10 cruisers and 20 torpedo boat destroyers. He entirely approved of the addition to the number of torpedo boat destroyers, because in in future warfare they would prove of great value for the protection of our harbours and vessels. The additional cruisers would be of great assistance in protecting our enormous seaborne commerce, but battleships were essentially the class which would in future do most to decide finally the fate of Naval wars. Therefore it would have been much more desirable that the programme should have provided for three battleships of *The Barfleur* class instead of two of the first-class cruisers and two second-class cruisers. Last year the First Lord said, in a speech in this House :—

> "It is the anxious desire of the Government to maintain the Navy in a condition which will insure our supremacy at sea; and we believe that the programme we have prepared, extending over five years, will be amply sufficient for this purpose."

That was a satisfactory and reassuring statement; and now they knew the provision that had been made for strengthening the Navy during the first two of this mysterious five years' programme, the full details of which they were not permitted to know. According to his calculations, which he had made pretty closely, the result of the provision for the first two years was to leave us in this position: our armoured Navy of ships built, building, and provided for, compared with a combination of the Russian and French armoured fleets under similar conditions, left us in a minority of two battleships, 14 very powerful armoured coast-defence vessels, and two first-class armour-belted cruisers. Under these conditions he had no hesitation in saying that in his opinion the omission of the battleships from the present building programme could not be considered satisfactory.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Earl SPENCER): This is not the first time I have had to rise in this House to take part in discussion initiated by my noble Friend behind me (Lord Brassey). When I see the noble and gallant Lord opposite, who, from his experience on active service and at the Admiralty, is undoubtedly one of the highest authorities on Naval affairs in this country, I wish that, instead of having my noble Friend behind asking me questions and raising discussion, I had him in reserve to help me in replying to the speeches of other noble Lords who are masters of this subject. I do not complain of my noble Friend for raising this discussion. He has an almost unique experience and authority outside the service in Naval matters; he has done great service to the Navy in many ways, and, besides that, has had the advantage of holding office at the Admiralty. I therefore feel some difficulty in differing in any degree from my noble Friend, and, though I shall be obliged to differ from him to some extent to-night, I am glad to think that on the whole I can agree with my noble Friend. My noble Friend laid down this proposition—that in considering the forces that we ought to raise for our naval service, we are not entirely to rely on those employed on active duty. He says, with great truth, that other countries do not rely entirely on those employed actively in the Navy, and that we ought not to do so either. I generally concur in that proposition. It would, I quite admit, be inordinately extravagant on our part if all the men who are required for fighting warships in time of war should always be kept on full pay and on active service. We should have either to increase very largely the number of ships in commission, or keep a larger number of men in our ports, either in hulks or in barracks, unemployed. I therefore agree generally in the proposition that, in order to secure the numbers we must eventually have to man our ships in time of war, we must look to the Reserve, and if we look to the Reserve, beyond the pensioners, we must look to the Royal Naval Reserve, who are men taken, in a great measure, from the great merchant service of this country. In regard to this I should differ from my noble and gallant friend, probably, as to the proportions he desires to be taken from our Reserves. I will venture to say this, however, that the principle on which we propose to man our ships in time of war is a very sensible one and a very sound one. What we propose is that in every ship the large leaven of the crew should consist of men trained in the active service of the Navy. A certain proportion may be found from the Royal Naval Reserve. But there is another point to be considered. When a war breaks out we shall probably have the best part of our fleet, the most likely part to come into contact with an enemy, abroad. We cannot, therefore, recruit from those ships or send out to them any large proportion of Naval Reserve men. Even if we could it would be foolish, just at the moment when we wish them to be most efficient, to deprive them of some of their most efficient men. This is true of the Mediterranean Fleet, the Pacific Fleet, the China Fleet, and other fleets on distant stations. No doubt, as war went on and vacancies occurred, we might supplement them to some extent from the Royal Naval Reserve, but at the outset of a war we should not be able to man ships engaged in active warfare with men of the Naval Reserve. Coming to the ships nearer home, there, no doubt. we should be able to employ a certain proportion of Royal Naval Reserve men, and the more efficient you make them the more you may increase their number; but, at the same time, it is essential, in the opinion of our naval advisers, that a very large proportion of the ships' crews—not only the blue-jackets, but also the engine-room complement—should be men who are highly trained in the service. There is a point in this which, I think, is worth referring to. No doubt in times gone by ships in our Navy have, under distinguished officers, fought most gallant actions and done great service with crews picked up for the Commission itself, but as a general rule it is of the highest importance to promote what has been called the solidarity of our ships' crews. It is of the utmost importance that men should know their officers, and that officers should know their men, and that they should be accustomed to act together. It increases enormously the efficiency and power of our ships of war. That is especially true of ships that have now come prominently forward in naval warfare—ships of the torpedo-destroyer type. These ships are driven at a speed never dreamed of in past days. Many of them travel at the rate of 30 miles an hour. If anybody entered the engine-room of a torpedo-boat destroyer and noticed what was going on, he would at once see the absolute necessity of having highly-trained men. I have here a paper prepared in answer to a question I put to the Engineer-in-Chief of the Navy on this point, and it is worth quoting to illustrate the enormous strides that have been made in these torpedo-boat destroyers, and what immense stress is put on the officers and men on those vessels. I find that whereas in the second-class cruiser the revolutions are 140 per minute, and in the third-class cruiser 160 to 180, in the torpedo-boat destroyer the revolutions are 370 to 400 a minute. That alone shows what an enormous change has come over the service, and what enormous stress is placed on all those who have to do with this kind of vessel. If a mistake was made in attending to such engines or in stoking their fires, you might at once have an accident of a very serious kind, and, certainly, the whole efficacy of the vessel in regard to speed would be lost. It is, therefore, incumbent on the Admiralty to see that these torpedo vessels not only have officers highly trained, but engine-room artificers and stokers equally highly trained. I mention this to show the absolute necessity for maintaining a large number of highly-trained men in the Navy. I do not think my noble Friend will disagree with that. [Lord Brassey: "Hear, hear."] I do not quite follow him in all his figures. He says that in the next few years we shall require to add 30,000 men to the strength of the Navy. The noble and gallant Lord opposite does not put the number at quite such a high figure. I bow to the authority of the noble and gallant Lord, and I do not differ very seriously from him with regard to the number he puts forward. I quite admit that in the next few years we shall probably have to add to the number of men of all classes in the Navy, but I think it must be a gradual process, and I do not think that the noble and gallant Lord himself would wish the increase to be made at once; I do not think, in any case, it would be necessary to increase the number to the extent proposed by my noble Friend behind me. While on this subject I might refer to another point which the noble and gallant Lord has touched upon. He referred to the experiment we tried last year of raising 800 men from outside direct for the Navy. I quite admit that that experiment has not succeeded. We never were very sanguine that it would, but we thought it deserved to be tried. We are able, however, to try another experiment and to endeavour to tap a new source of recruiting for the Navy. That is to say, we are endeavouring to obtain boys of an older class than those who have hitherto been such admirable pupils in the training ships. The *Northampton* was commissioned for the purpose of engaging older boys for the Navy. That ship was directed to cruise along the coast, visiting the different ports of the country, as we thought it was of great importance to get boys from the various ports of the country, in that way creating a new field for recruiting and increasing the interest of all classes of the community in the Navy. These older boys are not trained for so long a time as those in the training ships, and boys are now going out to the fleets abroad; but it would be rash on my part to say that the experiment has been perfectly successful, though, as far, as we know, we have succeeded quite as well as if not better than we expected. The noble and gallant Lord opposite referred to the question of the marines. I know he very properly and justly approves highly of this part of Her Majesty's forces, and I do not differ from him in that. I believe no more efficient forces of the Crown can be found than the marines, whether you take the marine artillery or the marine light infantry. Since we have been in office we have added 1,000 men to the Royal Marine forces. We did not make any addition this year, and I will give our reason for not doing so. The emergency was not so great as to make us think that we ought to sacrifice any efficiency in the men's training. We were told that if we raised further the number of men we should run a considerable risk of losing their efficiency, because our barrack accommodation was not sufficient. We are taking measures to increase the accommodation at Walmer, and I hope that the policy which we have pursued before may, when we have more accomodation, be again adopted, because I fully agree with the noble and gallant Lord that if we want to increase the force of the Navy we cannot do so better than by increasing the Marines. Now, I come to what I conceive to be the most important part of my noble Friend's speech. He proposes that we should train a considerably larger number of boys for the Navy, and engage them for five years' service, to be followed by 15 years' connection with the Royal Naval Reserve. I am not quite clear about the meaning of my noble Friend's proposal. Does he mean that we are to have a number of men engaged for five years, in addition to those who are now trained in various ports, and who are engaged first for 12 years and then for 10 years more if they wish it, or are we to alter the whole present system of training for the Navy? [Lord BRASSEY: "I meant in addition."] That would involve very serious difficulties. My noble Friend says that it is the part of statesmen to overcome difficulties. I admit that it is the part of statesmen to endeavour to do so, but there may be difficulties which it is impossible for them to overcome, and there would be most serious difficulties in the way of carrying out my noble Friend's proposal. We should have, in the same ships, men engaged for 12 years' service and for five years' service. That alone would create the greatest possible confusion on board ship. It would be detrimental to discipline, and would cause discontent among the older men engaged for the longer period. The idea of altering altogether the system of training for the Navy, and of introducing a five year' service has presented itself to the minds of a good many people, but if we accepted this plan we should be training in the Royal Navy for the Merchant Service, instead of using the Merchant Service as a means of training Naval Reserve men for the Navy. This would be a most expensive operation, and I doubt greatly whether it would be efficacious. We should not know where to find the men when we might require their services, and after they have been trained at a great cost they would go from the Navy just when they were becoming really efficient. This plan would be such a change that we ought to pause before adopting it. My noble Friend wishes that this question should be referred to a Departmental Committee. But before a matter is referred to a Committee of that kind, the Ministers appointing it must lay down the principles upon which it is to work. I do not think that a Departmental Committee ought to lay down principles in a matter of such great importance as this. It is a subject that ought to be discussed by the Board of Admiralty itself. My noble Friend referred to the French. I always think that it is rather a dangerous thing for anybody in this country to attempt to lay down precisely the conditions under which a foreign service is carried on. We, no doubt, have information about it, but we cannot be so informed about it as to be able to state with authority exactly what is going on in a foreign service. The noble Lord has referred to the large number of men who belong to the *inscription maritime* in France. I believe that the number of men attributed to this reserve force in France has been very much exaggerated. There was a very interesting letter not long ago in one of the newspapers which showed that, account being taken of the British seamen in our Mercantile Marine, and comparison being made between their numbers and the number of French seamen who remained in the *inscription maritime* after serving in the French Navy and at various ports, the difference in numbers was rather in our favour than against us. But I shall not dwell upon this, because I do not think that it is a very desirable thing to try to pass authoritative criticisms upon an institution abroad. But we must remember that in foreign countries they rely entirely on Conscription, whereas we rely on voluntary enlistment, and this alone makes such a difference that a comparison cannot be usefully made. I do not suppose that in this country, as long as the present conditions prevail, we shall ever have anything but voluntary enlistment for our Army and Navy. It is on this account that I think that comparisons between the French and the Russian and the British Navies are not fair nor wise. But I quite agree, of course, that if we are to have a Reserve, as I think we ought, we must make it as efficient as possible. I claim for the Admiralty that they have done a great deal to make the Royal Naval Reserve a more efficient force. We have encouraged officers in the Reserve to serve in the Royal Navy for a year, and we intend now to allow officers to serve for two years in the Royal Navy. We attach great importance to the training, believing it to be invaluable. Then, we encourage officers and men to go to guardships for drill purposes, and during the manœuvres we give employment to several hundred Naval Reserve men. We think it very important to draw more closely together those who manage our great Merchant Navy and the Royal Navy. Already we have to thank most of the great companies connected with the Merchant Navy for the assistance which they have given to us. It is very satisfactory to find that the training which their men obtain in the Navy is exceedingly valued by them. The discipline which the men learn when serving with the Fleet is such as they do not acquire in the Mercantile Marine, and that is one of the reasons why we find the great merchant companies willing and desirous to co-operate with us. We wish to make this co-operation still closer, for I am sure that the prosperity of one Service is largely dependent upon the prosperity of the other. One subject has been referred to, which I can only now touch upon lightly. I quite admit the great importance of having a sufficient number of officers for the Royal Navy. The number of lieutenants at this moment is much less than it should be, and lieutenants take, as has been said, about ten years to train. The want of sufficient young officers is greatest at the present moment, when we are increasing the number of ships in commission. Not many years ago the number of officers training in *The Britannia* was increased, but we are not yet feeling the benefit of that increase. We shall, however, feel the benefit of the change as time goes on. Then we have this year increased the number of the cadets in *The Britannia*, and we also propose to increase the number of naval cadets whom we take from *The Worcester* and *The Conway*. The question of the increase of the number of lieutenants is one that the Admiralty are very carefully considering, and they are preparing a plan to meet this want for the present and the future. The noble and gallant Lord referred to the Committee presided over by Sir Anthony Hoskins. That Committee has investigated the whole subject of the efficiency of the Navy. The scheme adopted in 1870 or 1872 has, of course, by this time, been tried, and the deficiencies in it have been discovered. The position of officers in the Navy, their numbers, and the subject of promotion were all referred to the Committee to which I have alluded, and it has prepared a most useful and exhaustive Report. I hope, in a few weeks, if not a few days, to be able to announce what is proposed to be done, and we trust that our proposals will give satisfaction to the Service, and prevent the serious state of things which would exist in the future if things were allowed to remain as they are now. I shall not follow the noble and gallant Lord in what he said with regard to the ship-building programme, for the reason that this was not part of the subject of my noble Friend's proposal. I should have been quite prepared to go into the matter if notice had been given, but I certainly shall not go into it at this moment. All I will say is this, I absolutely abide by the quotation he was good enough to make from a speech of mine made, I suppose, in this House last year. The present Board of Admiralty have proposed a programme which they have thought necessary for maintaining the supremacy of the Navy on the sea. We adhere to our views, and we believe that what we have proposed, with regard to ships and to other requirements of the Fleet, will put Her Majesty's Navy in that efficient position which I believe the country requires and expects of the British Navy.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

Moved,—That a Committee of Six Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session (The Lord Chancellor, *Lord Herschell*).

Agreed to.

The Lords following were named of the Committee :—The Lord Chancellor, Earl Morley, Lord Watson, Lord Halsbury, Lord Thring, and Lord Welby.

Ordered—That the Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint them therewith, and to request them to appoint Six Members of that House to be joined with the said Committee, pursuant to the Resolution of this House of the 18th instant and to the Message of the House of Commons of yesterday signifying their concurrence in the said Resolution.

Earl Spencer.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL.

Read 3^a (according to order), and passed.

DISTRESS BILL—[H.L].

Read 3^a (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at Ten minutes before Six o'clock until Monday next, at a Quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 22nd March, 1895.

The House met at Two of the clock.

QUESTIONS.

TEAK FOR HER MAJESTY'S SHIPS.

MR. G. WHITELAW (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty if the quality of the teak timber supplied to the dockyards of recent years has been found unsatisfactory, and that, in consequence, it was considered desirable to attempt to make the terms of tender for the requirements of 1895-6 much more stringent; if the Department, having decided to abandon the stringent terms, have placed the contract on modified conditions with the same contractors who supplied the unsatisfactory timber complained of last year, without asking the trade for fresh tenders on these modified conditions; and what difference there is, if any, between the price paid by the Department and the lowest offer received by them for supplies on ordinary market conditions?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): The quality of Teak imported of late years has not been so good as previously, and this year the Admiralty specification was made more stringent. The result has been that not a single offer to the specification has been made, and it became necessary to accept the best offer outside the specification, log by log, which was that of the same firm as received the contract last year. The difference in price between the lowest offer for a market cargo, which was quite unsuitable in every way, and the price accepted was 64s. a load.

FIELD ARMY EQUIPMENT.

LORD STANLEY (Lancashire, S.E., Westhoughton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the stores required for the equipment of the Field Army on mobilisation are complete in all respects at the present date; if not, what sum of money is required, approximately, to provide for the deficiencies, and why was not provision made in last year's Estimates for the completion of these most important reserves; and is it intended, during the coming financial year, to provide for their completion?

***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR** (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): The noble Lord will scarcely expect that, having in view the good of the public service, I can answer his question in any detail. If from time to time deficiencies are found to exist steps are taken to supply them.

BRITISH SUBJECTS IN NICARAGUA.

COLONEL C. E. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government has instructed the British Minister to the Republics of Central America to inquire that reparation shall be made by Nicaragua for its recent infraction of the territory of the Mosquito Reserve, and for its arbitrary action as regards the British Vice Consul?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): A communication has been made to the Nicaragua Government through the Minister of that Republic accredited to this country with regard to the arrest at Bluefields, imprisonment, and expulsion from Nicaragua of certain British subjects last August. Until the reply of the Nicaraguan Government has been received it is not desirable to make any public statement as to the terms of the communication made to them.

SCHOOL BANK ACCOUNTS.

MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education what is the rule of the Education Department with regard to bank charges and bank interest and commission for overdrawn school accounts; why some schools are allowed to charge interest and others are not; and, seeing that bank interest is in many cases an absolute necessary expenditure, as the grant for the year and for one quarter of the fee grant are not paid till at least six weeks after they are due, and that the bankers' commission is necessary in the case of all schools, inasmuch as every school is now compelled to have a banking account, if he will in future allow such charges to appear on the expenditure side of the annual balance sheet?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The rule of the Department is that bank charges for keeping an account, and bank commission on cashing drafts, are held admissible under Article 90 of the Code as expenditure which may be met out of school income. But charges for interest on overdrafts are held to be inadmissible under that Article. When interest on overdrafts has been paid, and is entered in the school accounts, the charge is allowed to appear on the expenditure side of the balance sheet, but the managers are given the option of withdrawing it and defraying the charge from some other fund. If it is not withdrawn, the school income is reduced *pro tanto* for the purpose of Article 107 (b).

UNITED STATES INCOME TAX.

MR. A. WEBB (Waterford, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that all holders of United States securities must, under under the penalty of 50 per cent. extra United States Income Tax, send in returns of their total income before the 15th April; and could he ascertain, through the Foreign Office or otherwise, where the forms upon which such returns are to be made can be procured, and to whom they are to be forwarded?

SIR E. GREY: A notice on the subject was inserted in the *London Gazette* of the 19th. As regards detail, persons interested should communicate with Her Majesty's Consul-General at New York.

ARMENIAN ECCLESIASTICS.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is a fact, as stated in Reuter's telegram of yesterday from Constantinople, that the Sultan of Turkey has given orders for the release of all the Armenian Ecclesiastics imprisoned in dungeons of Asiatic Turkey, and has he any further details to communicate on this subject?

SIR E. GREY: I am glad to be able to state that we have received information from Constantinople to the effect that all Armenian Ecclesiastics who are at present undergoing sentences are to be brought at once to Constantinople with the documents relating to their cases; with the exception of those who are condemned for murder or other crimes, all are to be released on taking an oath of good behaviour.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) said, that as on a previous occasion many persons who were released by order of the Sultan were re-arrested by the local authorities, care would be taken to see that that did not happen now.

SIR E. GREY: That is an entirely different question.

THE CARLOW CROWN SOLICITOR.

MR. JOHN HAMMOND (Carlow): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) what is the age of the present Crown Solicitor for Carlow; (2) does the office of Crown Solicitor come under the 65 rule; (3) is he aware that the Crown Solicitor for Carlow has been unable from old age and infirmity to attend the last assizes; (4) and, whether in view of the fact that the Government insisted on resignation in the case of the Limerick Crown Solicitor, who was incapacitated by infirmity although his work was satisfactorily discharged by his son, he will state what course will be pursued in regard to Carlow?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-on-Tyne): There is no official record of the age of the present holder of the office of Crown Solicitor for Carlow, which does not in his case, I am told, fall within the scope of the 65th rule. The Attorney General sanctioned the employment of a substitute for this gentleman at the last assizes on the ground of his illness, and I understand the Crown business at that assizes was of a trifling character. The late Crown Solicitor for Limerick had been unable for several years to discharge his duties in person through loss of sight, and so far as I am aware the inability of the Crown Solicitor of Carlow to attend his duty was only on the occasion of the last assizes.

THE FALLS OF FOYERS.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the County Council and the Road Board have yet come to any decision as to the threatened interference with the Falls of Foyers?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): In reply to the hon. Member, I am informed by the county clerk of Inverness-shire that Foyers Road Board, at a meeting on 8th current, postponed consideration of the proposal to submerge roads till May meeting; meantime calling on Aluminium Company to submit to Board plans and sections of proposed works, to enable them to judge whether district would be injuriously affected thereby.

MR. A. C. MORTON: Will my right hon. Friend say whether they have to present a plan of the works as well as of the roads?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: The words are "plans and sections of the proposed works."

*DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): Is it a fact that the Chairman of the Committee and Roads Board is also factor to the landlord? I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he does not think that this is a fair case for inquiry by the Secretary for Scotland?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: I believe that gentlemen interested are on the Roads Board in this and other cases, but it will be impossible for me to take away any functions from the Roads Board on that account.

*DR. MACGREGOR: Assuming that the County Council of London sought to divert the River Thames into another channel, would it not form a legitimate case for Parliamentary enquiry, the principle being the same?

MR. A. C. MORTON asked whether these gentlemen would have a right to vote on the county Roads Board?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: That is a fair matter for inquiry. My own impression is that they could not be deprived of that right except if they were engaged in some contract in relation to the business of the Roads Board itself.

VOLUNTEER LONG SERVICE MEDALS.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether there is any regulation as to the time within which the Officers commanding Volunteer Battalions are bound to distribute long service medals to those who are entitled to receive them?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There is no regulation as to the time within which medals must be distributed; but it is desirable that a Commanding Officer should distribute them at the earliest date on which he can reckon on a good muster of Volunteers.

FOREIGN CHEESE.

MR. J. K. WINGFIELD-DIGBY (Dorset, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that large quantities of foreign cheese are being sold for English; and whether he will take steps to extend the Trade Marks Act to include cheese, or give facilities for the passing of a short Bill to this effect?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HERBERT GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): I am aware of the statements made on the subject to which the hon. Member calls attention, and with reference to the suggestions made by him in the second paragraph of his question, I would observe that cheese clearly falls within the scope of the Merchandise Marks Acts, and that, if specific cases can be brought under my notice in which any false trade description has been applied to that commodity, I should be glad to consider whether the circumstances call for the institution of proceedings by the Board of Agriculture under the Act of last Session.

AN IRISH RIGHT OF WAY QUESTION.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the allegations made in the Report of the Howth Rights of Way Association to the effect that the War Department has parted with certain Crown lands at Sutton over which rights of way existed, and granted them to a Mr. Jameson, purporting in the deed of exchange to extinguish the public rights of way previously existing from time immemorial; what moved the War Office to enter into this transaction; who is the official responsible: is the matter finally closed, or is there any means of recalling what has been done; under what Act and by whose signature are Crown lands presented to private persons; and, at whose instance was the clause affecting rights of way inserted in the deed.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I am obliged to the hon. Member for having put off this question and afforded me time for fully inquiring into it. The War Department possessed a right of way across certain property at Sutton and a roadway beyond, leading to the sea-face. For mutual convenience these were exchanged for a right-of-way leading to the same point through another part of the estate. No public right of way was extinguished and the respective properties remained subject to any existing rights-of-way (other than those of the War Department) and other easements, none of which are affected by any clause in the Deed of Exchange. There was no gift of land made to a private person, and I am unable to see that the public in any way suffer by the arrangement.

MR. T. M. HEALY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would be good enough to consider the Rights of Way Association in this matter, by allowing inspection by their solicitor of the deeds and documents which, I presume, are in the hands of the Chief Crown Solicitor in Ireland.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not know whether there would be anything unusual in that request, but, on the face of it, I do not see anything unreasonable in it. There is nothing to conceal. We are not a party to the surrender of any public right whatever.

Mr. T. M. HEALY wished to know what advantage the country had attained by this transaction.

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The public have not given up anything to the individual proprietor. The War Office have given up their right of way over one piece of ground in order to get it over another piece of ground, which suits them just as well, and they have only parted with their own right of way.

Mr. T. M. HEALY inquired whether the proposal came from Mr. Jameson or from the War Office in the first instance?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The transaction was for the mutual convenience of the War Office and of Mr. Jameson, and did not affect any public right in any way. I have not been over the ground myself, but, from the plans and all the information which I have received, I do not think that the public are in any way damnified.

Mr. T. M. HEALY inquired whether the House would be allowed an opportunity of discussing this subject, and whether the Government would lay all the documents on the Table of the House?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: I do not know whether it is usual, or whether in this instance, a sufficient case is made out for the production of the documents. If it will suit my hon. Friend's purpose, I have no objection to his seeing the documents.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Irish officers of the Inland Revenue have called the attention of the Treasury to the legal action of Mr. Andrew Jameson who seeks to exclude the public from the user of the road from the Coast Guard Station at Sutton through the property he recently acquired; have the coastguards patrolled the cliffs at Sutton during the whole of the present century for the prevention of smuggling; and will the Inland Revenue be represented in Court when Mr. Jameson's claim is heard?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir John Hibbert, Oldham): The attention of the Treasury has not been called to this matter, and from inquiries which I have hastily made from the Inland Revenue, it does not appear to be a case affecting that Board in any way. I need not inform my hon. Friend that the Coastguard are under the directions of the Admiralty.

ST. JAMES'S PARK ORNAMENTAL WATER.

Mr. PERCY THORNTON (Clapham): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the ornamental water in St. James's Park can be immediately cleaned out by utilising the services of the unemployed, so that the public may not lose the boating on the lake during the coming Easter holidays?

***The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS** (Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Leeds, W.): The cleaning out of the lake in St. James's Park is now in active progress, and about 70 extra men are employed upon it. It is not practicable as yet to fix the date for the completion of the work, as it cannot be ascertained until the mud has been removed what repairs may be required to the concrete bottom. But the work shall be pushed on as rapidly as possible.

Mr. THORNTON: Do I understand that it will not be done by Easter.

***Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE**: I am afraid that it will not be possible to do it by Easter.

Mr. THORNTON: Is there not also a sanitary question involved, arising from the affluvia being very disagreeable?

***Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE**: The mud will be cleaned out as quickly as possible, but the repair of the concrete bottom must necessarily take some time.

FIRING INTO A DWELLING HOUSE.

***Mr. W. E. MACARTNEY** (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he has any information as to an attack made by armed and masked men who fired into the house of Jeremiah Kelleher, of Cordal; (2) whether he is aware that at Castleisland the brother-in-law of Boyle, who recently gave evidence which led to the execution of Twiss, was attacked; and whether any persons have been made amenable?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Paragraphs 1 and 2 have reference to the same case, namely, the firing a shot through the door of Kelleher's house at Cordal, near Castleisland, on the night of the 15th instant. No person was injured. Kelleher is brother-in-law of Boyle, referred to in the question. No one has yet been made amenable.

THE VACCINATION COMMISSION.

MR. C. H. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton): I beg to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board why neither Sir George Buchanan nor Dr. Ballard, formerly Chief Medical Officer and Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, offered themselves for examination in defence of vaccination before the Royal Commission; whether both suffered from indisposition when their attendance was required; and whether, seeing that Sir George Buchanan has since recovered sufficiently to undertake the Chairmanship of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis, there is any obstacle at present to prevent either of these gentlemen from being examined if the Royal Commission on Vaccination desire it?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Sir WALTER FOSTER, Derby, Ilkeston): It is not the practice of officers of the Local Government Board to offer themselves for examination before a Royal Commission. Some inquiry was made as to the attendance of Sir George Buchanan and Dr. Ballard before the Royal Commission on Vaccination, and it is the fact that both these gentlemen were then prevented by indisposition from attending. I regret to state that Sir George Buchanan is still out of health, and on this account he undertook the chairmanship of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis with great reluctance.

MR. C. H. HOPWOOD: I beg to ask the Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board whether Dr. Ballard, formerly a Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, was the inspector who made a Report to the Board in the case of Emily Maud Child, an infant who died at Leeds in 1889 of syphilis, acquired, according to the verdict of the coroner's jury, from vaccination, in which he reflected upon the character of the child's parents, and exonerated vaccination; whether his Report was disagreed with, and shown to be without foundation as regards the parents, by medical authority employed by the Royal Commission; whether the Report was submitted by the then President of the Royal Commission on Vaccination, and whether it has been published; and why Dr. Ballard did not take the opportunity, as was promised on his behalf, of appearing before the Commission to explain or vindicate his Report?

SIR WALTER FOSTER: I am unable to add anything to the answers already given to the numerous questions as to the case of this child, and particularly to the very lengthy answer which I gave on the 19th September, 1893, to a question on the subject put to me by my hon. Friend. The Local Government Board have not received any Report from the Royal Commission on Vaccination as to the case, nor has any such Report been published. As I have previously stated, Dr. Ballard has been most anxious to give evidence before the Commission, but for many months he has been entirely confined to his house by illness.

RELIEF WORKS IN IRELAND.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been directed to a letter in the public press by the Rev. I. M'Ateer, Catholic Curate, Glencolumbkill, county Donegal, stating that between 40 and 50 families in his own district have been kept for upwards of a fortnight in the direst need, owing to the delay arising from the practice which requires all applications for employment on relief works to be granted, not by the local authorities, but by officials in Dublin Castle, and directing notice to the fact that he, although intimately acquainted with the circumstances of his parishioners, had not been consulted in the distribution of employment on the relief works, but that his suggestions that work should be given to a number of the most needy cases, a list of whose names he furnished, were disregarded; and whether he will direct that communications between the local superintendents at the relief works and the Castle authorities be carried on with greater expedition, and that inquiries be made into the matters complained of in Father M'Ateer's letter.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have seen the published letter of the reverend gentleman, to which reference is made. In replying to my hon. and learned Friend's previous question, on the 14th inst., I stated that the onus of determining who are eligible for employment on relief works devolves upon the Local Government Board, and that the Castle authorities in no way interfere in the selection of the persons to be employed. This duty is a most important one, and the Inspectors of the Local Government Board are fully alive to the responsibilities falling upon them in this respect. It is open to clergymen and others to forward to the Local Government Board the names of persons who are considered deserving of employment, but experience has conclusively shown that in the administration of State relief it is absolutely necessary that the determining voice in the selection of the recipients of that relief shall be officials who are responsible to the Government, and free from local pressure and interests. The rules framed for the employment of persons on works were drawn up with great care, and in the light of previous experience, and it is not proposed to alter them. I am satisfied that no unnecessary delay is allowed to elapse in giving employment to all who are considered qualified for it.

Mr. MACNEILL: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly inquire into the matter, and see that the Inspectors of the Local Government Board do not treat the representations of those who know the locality with contemptuous disregard?

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): If the rules are so carefully drawn up, why is it necessary to have to refer to Dublin?

Mr. J. MORLEY: When I was last in Ireland I had an interview with most of the Local Government Board Inspectors, and instructions were given. I do not think it was necessary that in every case they should, as far as possible, visit the clergy, and obtain their views. If we were to allow the local authorities under pressure of the local interests to place as many persons as they like on the list, it would place them in an unfair position, and take about eight times as much money as is proposed. I shall give instructions not to lose time.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): Do I understand that the Chief Secretary really means it would cost eight times more.

Mr. J. MORLEY: No; that was a mere rhetorical expression.

THE WELSH CHURCH BILL.

Mr. D. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that in Return 240 of last Session, relating to the endowments of the Church in Wales, the Endowments attached to parochial benefices in the counties of Cardiff and Newport are included in those of Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire, and cannot be distinguished therefrom unless the parishes comprised in the former counties are known; whether he can name the parishes included in the counties of Cardiff and Newport, and say whether the areas of the counties are coterminous with those of the ecclesiastical parishes; and whether, out of the total ancient endowments attached to parochial benefices in Wales and Monmouthshire, amounting to a gross annual value of £234,000, the amount it is intended under the Established Church (Wales) Bill to vest in the councils of the counties of Cardiff and Newport will exceed £416 and £352 respectively; and if so, by how much in each case?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. Asquith, Fife, E.): I have no materials for answering this question which are not equally accessible to my hon. Friend. Indeed, it appears from the concluding paragraph that, so far as the pecuniary aspect of the matter is concerned, he is able to answer it himself, and, without pledging myself to their accuracy, I have no reason to doubt that the figures which he has suggested are correct.

Mr. D. THOMAS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether, under the Established Church (Wales) Bill, it is intended that the income of £88, arising out of the parish of Ystradyfodwg, and now paid to the Incumbent of Llantrissant, in Glamorganshire, is to be earmarked by the Council of that county to meet the wants and circumstances of Ystradyfodwg or Llantrissant; and (2) whether, in the latter case, the amount of gross income upon which the Rhondda Valleys will have a prior claim exceeds £489?

MR. ASQUITH: There is no question of earmarking; the tithe rentcharge goes to the County Council to be disposed of by schemes, in the framing of which due regard is to be had to the wants and circumstances of the parish in or from which the property is situate or has been decided, and generally to the circumstances of the case. It is impossible to predict precisely how this power will be exercised in particular cases. As to the second paragraph, it is a matter of computation from the figures of the Parliamentary Return.

MONAGHAN ASSIZES.

MR. C. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to a trial at the recent Monaghan Assizes, where two Orangemen, named Doherty and Burrows, were charged with criminal assaults on two Roman Catholic little children; whether the Roman Catholic population of Monaghan is more than half; what number of Catholics were on the jury that tried the case referred to; whether he is aware that several jurors, especially a man named Sivan, who was foreman, were repeatedly called to order and rebuked by the learned counsel representing the Crown for intimidation of the children while giving their evidence; and whether, in the interests of justice, it could be arranged that, where all those responsible for the empanelling of a jury are of a particular denomination, some further safeguards may be imposed so that the fairness of the panel may be placed beyond suspicion?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Crown Solicitor informs me that one of the defendants in the case in question was convicted and sentenced to four months, imprisonment with hard labour, and that there was nothing whatever of a religious or party feeling in the case. The Crown Solicitor also states that none of the jurors were called to order or rebuked by the Judge, as alleged. The police state that the jury consisted of 10 Protestants and two Roman Catholics. Two jurors were ordered by the Crown Solicitor to stand by, and the prisoners' solicitor challenged five. The Crown Solicitor, in ordering jurors to stand by, did so under positive directions to order no one to stand by on the ground of politics or religion.

MR. DIAMOND: Is it not remarkable that in a district where the population is about equally divided, the numbers on the jury should be 10 to 2, and the 10 belonging to the same religion as the prisoners?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Crown Solicitor assures me he was unaware of the religion of the jurors until this question was put on the Paper and caused him to make inquiry. The Solicitor for the prisoners is a Roman Catholic.

MOTION.

WATERFORD INFIRMARY (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. JOHN REDMOND, Bill for the establishment of a Public Infirmary for the County of Waterford and the County of the City of Waterford, and for appropriating the Leper Hospital of Saint Stephen's for the purposes thereof; and for other purposes connected therewith.

Bill presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, 22nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 177.]

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

This Bill passed through Committee and was reported without Amendment to the House.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): At what hour will this Bill be taken on Monday?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (SIR JOHN HIBBERT, Oldham): I cannot say; it will depend on the business. But the Bill can be discussed at any hour.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESTABLISHED CHURCH (WALES) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read;

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a Second Time."

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—*(Sir Michael Hicks-Beach).*

Question proposed, that the word "now," stand part of the Question.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) resumed the Debate, and continued his speech which had been interrupted at midnight the previous night, by saying that he would confine himself to generalities, leaving all the main points as well as the details for the Committee stage. He hoped that he had not given more offence than was necessary to the Home Secretary, for whom he entertained the highest respect, as well as the greatest admiration for his ability; but it became necessary sometimes to stand up to the right hon. Gentleman and bring arguments home to him. The right hon. Gentleman was in the habit of striking out all round with effective energy, and he must not be surprised if occasionally he received knocks in return. The Home Secretary inferred from the historical analysis regarding the Welsh Church presented by him to the House that the Church in Wales was not now a National Church. The right hon. Gentleman repeated that assertion in every form of expression; indeed, he exhausted the phraseology of which the English language was capable in asserting and reasserting that proposition. It was, indeed, the burden of his song. He submitted, however, that this argument of the right hon. Gentleman came perhaps one century too late. It might have been adduced with some show of reason a hundred years ago, probably with some degree of plausibility up to 1830; but for the last 50 years it had ceased to be applicable, and in one or two decades its applicability would disappear altogether. But supposing, for the sake of argument, that the Church was not now national. What was the inference from premises so imperfect? That the Church should be despoiled of nearly a quarter of a million of annual income to be diverted to secular purposes. Was there ever a conclusion so illogical, so unreasonable, and so unrighteous? It had been argued that this money devoted to Divine service had not been made to go as far as might be desired, and that some remedy ought to be devised. But why, because the money had not been used as earnestly as wisely, and as effectively as possible for sacred purposes, should it be devoted to Parish Councils and village improvements? It was impossible to imagine a more blundering and plundering piece of legislation based on such insufficient conclusions, and based on promises still more insufficient. The Church was a corporation; corporations could lawfully own property; tithe was the endowment and the property of the Church; to take away tithe therefore, even by legislation, was legislative robbery. Tithe had been devoted for many centuries to sacred purposes; to rob that which was sacred was sacrilege; therefore, this measure was sacrilege. Those were the links in the chain of reasoning, and he defied the Home Secretary to break any one of the links. Referring to the statistical argument of the Bishop of St. Asaph, tossed aside somewhat contemptuously by the Home Secretary, he maintained that, after all was said, the Bishop was right. The point was this: the Bishop's statistics implied that 47 per cent. of the Welsh electorate had voted against Disestablishment, which left 53 per cent. of the electorate either active or passive supporters of the Church. It came to this, therefore, that among the opponents of the Establishment, the percentage of abstention on the day of the election was extremely small, whereas the percentage of abstention among the active or passive supporters of the Church was extremely large. Those statistics were significant when brought to bear on the question of the census. The Home Secretary tried to meet this question of the census by saying it was not necessary, because they could judge from the number of communicants and worshippers. He did not deny that those were very important considerations; but, unfortunately, they did not supply all the considerations involved in the case, because they knew that there was a large proportion of people who did not attend church regularly, and who seldom or never communicated. But that was no reason why they were not to be counted in a religious census. They had their religion and their Church; they were very respectable people; they did not disown Christianity, though they did not conform to its ordinances so much as they ought. Nevertheless, the Home Secretary gave his high authority to their exclusion. Why did he do this? Because he was afraid of the result of a religious census. The right hon. Gentleman knew very well that the statistics would come out much in the same form as that presented by the Bishop of St. Asaph. The real reason that the Government brought in the Bill was that there were 31 Welsh Members who were determined to have this Bill, and who would give their allegiance to the Liberal Party on no other conditions. It was not because of any failure of the Church, and not for the sake of ecclesiastical efficiency, but for a purely political reason. English Members did not admit the necessity of granting Welsh Disestablisment because 31 Welsh Members out of 34 demanded it. In his experience of 10 years he had never known the Welsh Members vote for any English measure because the majority of English Members desired it. They invariably tried to defeat the English majority by means of the Welsh, Scotch, and Irish votes. He did not deny their right to do this; but they could not complain if the same measure was dealt out to them. If they chose to exercise their private judgment on English measures without regard to the wishes of the English majority, English Members claimed the same right in respect of Welsh measures. Supposing that a measure for Disestablishing the Church in England were introduced, everyone knew that it would never be carried by the votes of English Members under any conceivable circumstances. But every Welsh Member would vote for such a measure notwithstanding. He had known cases of Metropolitan Bills supported by the overwhelming majority of the Metropolitan Members, but defeated by the votes of the Welsh Members. It was too bad to expect Englishmen to yield to the wishes of Welshmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen against their own judgment, when the same concession was never made to them. The Bill was also desired to please the Nonconformist Members for England, with a view to an ulterior attack on the English Church. There could be no doubt, and the policy would be thoroughly exposed to the English constituencies. The speeches of hon. Members showed as clearly as day that the arguments which were good of this Bill, were just as good of a Bill dealing with the Church in England. If the arguments were admitted for Wales, they would have to be admitted for England. This intention was explicit and absolute in the minds of nearly all the supporters of the present measure. Why did the Welsh Members insist upon this measure? At one time it seemed that it was for the sake of the money; but he would thankfully admit that they were now acquitted on that score. The money was not to be taken for the purpose of Nonconformist organisation, or for any religious purpose whatever, and he would far sooner have seen it so applied than to the mean and miserable purposes set forth in the Bill. Of course, the idea of £150,000 being spent on Parish Councils was gratifying to the rural parishioner in Wales; but that after all was a small gratification. The real reason for the Bill he would take out of the mouths of Welsh Members themselves. It was contained in the statement that in this 19th century there ought to be religious equality, and that there was religious inequality. It was religious jealousy which moved hon. Members. They believed that the ministers and the members of the Church of England gained some social advantage from the Establishment. If there were such social inequality, it did not arise from the Establishment. If the Church were Disestablished to-morrow, the social superiority, if it existed, would remain. He wished to speak with great kindness of his Christian brethren of the Nonconformist communities. Probably no Anglican had seen so much of them as he had. He had assisted their foreign ministers, and they would not accuse him, therefore, of unfriendliness. Heaven forbid that he should claim any superiority over them. He belonged to a Church which taught its members not to assume a pharisaical and self-complacent attitude towards their Christian brethren. But for the sake of a theoretical idea of social equality they could not make such a concession as would involve the robbery of the Church; that was too great a sacrifice to make for any friendship they might entertain towards their Nonconformist friends. They could not allow the cause of religion to be injured or the flag of religion to be hauled down for the sake of what they believed a fancy equality. This Bill, which was really not supported by proper reasons, would possibly pass through the House of Commons after an opposition of a very sturdy character, but he and his friends were confident it would never pass into law. In the words of Thackeray, it would march into darkness, and it would go where other Bills of a like character had gone. The Opposition were anxious that such a Bill should never pass into law until it had been argued out before the tribunal of the public opinion of England, and until a verdict had been taken upon it unmixed up with other items of the Newcastle programme. They were anxious the verdict of the people of England should be taken as to whether the English Church was to be disestablished or not, because they knew beyond dispute that if this measure for Wales be carried, another measure for England would follow. Fortunately, the cause of Establishment extended to Scotland, and there would be the grand spectacle of Englishmen and Scotchmen standing shoulder to shoulder in the cause of that common Establishment. He did not know whether hon. Gentlemen opposite realised the tremendous political power they were challenging, and whether they contemplated with complacency an alliance between the successors of Latimer and Ridley and the successors of John Knox. A struggle would arise as had not been seen in this century in England, and he could not doubt what the issue would be. It would be the old story of the Church militant now triumphant hereafter, for depend upon it she would be defended by a nationality which in persistency, perseverance and resolution was amongst the grandest of all nationalities on earth.

*MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) said, the House was always willing to listen to the interesting speeches of the hon. Member for Kingston, and if they had not been very much benefited by any acquisition of knowledge by the speech to which they had just listened, they had at least been interested. The hon. Baronet concluded his speech by saying that this Bill had no chance of passing into law, but that it would "march into darkness." By that he supposed the hon. Baronet meant that the Bill would march into the House of Lords. He was very thankful indeed to the hon. Baronet for this accurate description of "the other place" with reference to the Bill. The hon. Member was as qualified as anybody in the House to deal with the general question of Establishment or Disestablishment, but he would forgive them for saying that they did not acknowledge his right or title to speak with any authority at all upon the question as it affected the Principality of Wales. The hon. Baronet was properly regarded as an authority on India, but it sometimes happens that people who have an intimate knowledge of foreign lands and climes are wofully ignorant of the affairs of the countries which are nearest to them, and the hon, Baronet had shown the House he was no authority at all on the Principality. He told them the struggle would be a long and arduous one, and that he was determined to expose to his constituents what he was pleased to describe as the tactics of the Government and their allies in this matter. Personally he very much regretted to see from the Press that the hon. Baronet did not mean to seek reelection. They would, therefore, not be enabled to see what result his exposition of the tactics of the Government and their allies would have. The hon. Member had indulged in a syllogism in which he appeared to take a paternal pleasure, for he uttered it last night and repeated it to-day. He challenged the Home Secretary to dispose of his syllogism or of any part of it; in fact he thought that the syllogism he propounded—to use his own classical phrase—"knocked the bottom" out of the Home Secretary's argument; but it was a very easy matter—if the phrase could be repeated without Parliamentary offence—to "knock the bottom" out of the hon. Baronet's own syllogism because the first premiss he laid down could not be substantiated. The premiss he laid down was that the Church of England was a corporation. But no ecclesiastical authority could be adduced by any Member for that proposition. There was no such corporation as the Church of England. The vicar of the parish was a corporation sole, and the Dean and Chapter were a corporation aggregate; but there was no such thing as the corporation of the Church of England. Away went the first premiss of the syllogism of the hon. Member, and therefore down tumbled the syllogism. Then the hon. Baronet went on to approve apparently what had been described as the Hartingtonian theory with reference to the question of Church establishment. He said—

> "If you Welsh Members insist upon voting on English questions against our view, we must have the right to return the compliment by voting against Welsh Disestablishment."

They were quite prepared that each part of the United Kingdom should decide this matter for itself. That was what had been described and known now for many years as the Hartingtonian principle. Lord Hartington said the question of Disestablishment in Scotland ought to be decided by the views of the people of Scotland. It followed that the question of Disestablishment in Wales ought to be decided by the views and opinions of the Welsh people, and it followed, and he and his friends were perfectly willing to concede the point, that the question of the Disestablishment of the Church of England should be decided by the votes of the English people. Were the hon. Member and his friends prepared to make a bargain of that kind? Would hon. Members opposite allow the Welsh to decide this question for themselves, if they were allowed to decide the English question for themselves? The hon. Member shook his head. He was not prepared to go the length of his own argument. He would have English Members decide English questions; then why not Welsh Members Welsh questions?

SIR R. TEMPLE said, what he stated was that they should all participate in the question relating to the country at large. They should go together.

*MR. S. T. EVANS said, the illustration the hon. Member put was, "If the question of the Disestablishment of the Church of England comes before this House, will the Welsh Members refrain from voting?" The offer the Welsh Members made was to refrain from voting and allow the English to decide the question for themselves. He admitted that the question could hardly be said to be ripe in England, but as far as Wales was concerned there could be no doubt at all about it. Welsh Members did not conceal from the House the importance and the gravity of the issue which was involved in this measure. It was an issue affecting the social, the moral, and the religious life of one of the nations which constitute the United Kingdom; and the issue was grave and important also because no doubt it did bear on the larger question of the Disestablishment of the Church in England. They did not underrate the gravity or the importance of the measure at all, but at the same time they did not enter into its discussion with anything like misgiving, because they knew perfectly well that upon no issue as great and important as this, raising so serious a controversy, had the answer given by the people immediately affected been so clear, so unequivocal, and so decisive. They had been asked to control their language. He would endeavour to modify his language as much as it was possible to do under the circumstances of the case. He was not quite sure the task was an easy one. The task was not rendered easier by the fact that they knew and felt the past history and the present conduct of the State Church in Wales. Nor was the task made easier by the language and the method of argument adopted on the other side. The hon. Member who had just addressed the House said they were robbers, sacrilegious robbers — they were robbers of God. When phrases of that kind were used it was not easy for those who had to argue on the other side of the question always to keep their language within such moderation as they would like, anxious though they were that the battle should be fought with as little bitterness as was possible, and to avoid offence to the natural susceptibilities of their opponents. He did not propose to weary the House by entering into many of the details of the Bill, but he would endeavour to keep to the main principles which underlay the measure. They might be conveniently classified under three heads. First came the broad principle of Disestablishment; then the question of Disendowment; and, thirdly, the application of the money, or, in other words, the secularisation of the properties and revenues of the Church which would be set free after Disendowment. With regard to the first question, the principle of Disestablishment, he ventured to think that there were not many hon. Members who based their objection to the Bill upon the necessity for establishing a form of religion by law. The right hon. Baronet, the Member for West Bristol, who led the Opposition to the Bill, was one of the few hon. Members who took up that position, and while he respected the motives of such hon. Gentlemen, he must be forgiven for saying they were very old-fashioned and belated politicians on this question, for it would not be denied that the tendency of movement in all modern thought was in favour of allowing all forms of religion to be perfectly equal and perfectly free. That was particularly the case in all the English-speaking populations of the world. It was so in America, in our Colonies, in Ireland, which had happily accomplished the Disestablishment of its Church, and undoubtedly public feeling in Scotland tended in the same direction. The favourite argument of hon. Members who desired to see a form of religion established by law was, that there ought to be a national acknowledgment or recognition of religion by the State. But would they say that there was no acknowledgment or recognition of religion in America or in our Colonies? The best acknowledgment or recognition for the State to show towards religion was to allow every man to worship as he pleased, and not to inquire into anything so sacred as the religious opinions of its people, but to bring about the perfect equality of all forms of religion in the eyes of the law. Would anyone dream in the present day of founding or originating an Establishment of any one form of religion in this realm? Suppose there was no Established Church in existence in this Kingdom, would any one dare to propose to set one up and endow it in this, the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century? The right hon. Baronet, the Member for West Bristol, had said he was in favour of concurrent endowment, but that was not the Amendment he had placed on the paper. The Amendment he had put on the paper was, "That this Bill be read a second time on this day six months." Would the right hon. Baronet put down an Amendment proposing that the endowments of the Church in Wales should be appropriated for the concurrent endowment of all forms of religion in the Principality? If the right hon. Baronet proposed such an Amendment, what support would he receive from the Members of his own Party? He would give to hon. Members on the other side of the House, and particularly to the noble Lord the Member for Rochester (Viscount Cranborne), an authority whom they ought to accept upon the question as to whether or not the tendency of modern thought was in favour of Establishment. Lord Salisbury, speaking in the House of Lords in 1869, in the Debate on the Second Reading of the Irish Church Bill, used these very significant words—

> "As regards the question of Disestablishment, I do not think that many Speakers in this Debate have ventured to treat that as an open question . . . . . The right Reverend Prelate (the Bishop of Peterborough) in his splendid argument on this subject, distinctly said that the principle of establishments was irrevocably gone . . . . But having told us that he considered the principle of Establishments was irrevocably gone, and that Amendments in Committee were necessary, he, the Bishop of Peterborough, was about to join in a Vote which would render the carrying of these Amendments impossible. My Lords, I am free to confess that I cannot go so far as he does."

The noble Marquess carried his opinion to its logical conclusion, for he voted in favour of the Second Reading of the Irish Church Bill in the House of Lords upon the distinct ground that the day of Establishment was gone. He would also call the attention of the House to the extraordinary Bill which had been brought in a few days ago by the hon. Member for Selkirk (Mr. Thorburn), and the noble Lord, the Member for West Edinburgh (Viscount Wolmer), two Unionist Members, and by others who were Conservative Members, which proposed to refer the question of the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland to the people of Scotland. The Bill, in fact, proposed the introduction of the Referendum in Scotland for the settlement of the matter, for, according to its provisions and schedule, the question on which the people of Scotland were to be asked to vote was, "Ought the Church of Scotland to be disestablished and disendowed? Yes or no." The House would observe that the question was not divided into two. It was not, "Ought the Church of Scotland to be disestablished, or ought it to be disendowed?" There was but one comprehensive question, which it was proposed to ask the people of Scotland: "Ought the Church of Scotland to be disestablished and disendowed? Yes or no?" The Bill would put the people of Scotland to the trouble of a General Election on this one question; and it must be assumed to acknowledge, therefore, that if a majority of the people of Scotland did vote for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of Scotland, this House ought to grant, and was prepared to grant, that Disestablishment and that Disendowment. Again, look at the remarkable resolution which was passed by the Convocation of Canterbury in the House of Laymen in 1893 in regard to the Bill before the House. He supposed that if the Convocation of Canterbury thought they could argue against Disestablishment as such, or pass a resolution against Disestablishment as such, they would do so; but they had not based their resolution in opposition to the Bill on any such ground. The resolution ran:—

> "That the Disestablishment of such portion only of the Church of England as is included in Wales would involve an organic severance of that portion from the rest of the Church; and, while Parliament has an undoubted power to dissolve the connection between the State and the Church as a whole, if it considers such a measure to be for the public benefit, it has no moral right to effect an organic severance of a portion of the Church from the rest, against the will both of that portion and of the rest of the Church."

Was not that resolution as complete an acknowledgment of the right of Parliament to deal with the question as could well be made? The right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol had complained that the argument of the Home Secretary was an argument in favour of the principle of Disestablishment in the case of England as well as in the case of Wales. Precisely so. In principle the question whether there ought to be an Establishment in England must be considered from the same standpoint as the question whether there ought to be an Establishment in Wales; and he was glad that the Liberal Party were prepared to avow that they thought that the same principles ought to be applied to the English Church in England as to the Church of England as it existed in Wales. But the question now before the House was whether there ought to be Disestablishment and Disendowment in the special case of Wales. Was the Establishment for the benefit of the State or of the Church? The right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol had said he was in favour of establishment of religion more upon the ground that the connection benefited the State, than upon the ground that the connection benefited religion itself. But where did the connection between the Church and State most clearly manifest itself? In the presence of the Bishops in the House of Lords. If there was any advantage to the State in the State allying itself with a particular form of religion, it ought to be exemplified in the action of the Bishops in the House of Lords. But could the right hon. Baronet look back with any pride, or pleasure, or, indeed, could he look back even with equanimity, on the action of the Bishops in the House of Lords? Why, there never had been a great reform proposed or carried out for the benefit of the people that had not suffered from the active hostility of the Bishops in the House of Lords. Did the connection benefit the Church? The fact was, that so far from the Church in Wales having benefited by its connection with the State, all the shortcomings, all the weaknesses, and the decline of the Welsh Church, were to be attributed in the first place to that connection; and, secondly, to its incorporation with the English State Church by the absorption of its sees by Canterbury. Canterbury had formerly filled all the bishoprics, all the canonries, and all the other high offices of the Church in Wales with Englishmen in defiance of the feeling of Wales. That could not have been done if the Church had not been connected with the State. Reference had been made to the improvement in that respect which took place in the Welsh Church in the time of the Tudors and, to a lesser extent, in the time of the Stuarts. The reason was obvious. The Tudors were of Welsh descent. Henry VII. was a Welshman, and Henry VIII. and Elizabeth had Welsh sympathies, and they pursued in regard to the Church a policy of paying some respect to the feelings and sentiments of Wales. But, unfortunately for the Welsh Church, that policy had not been continued. At the accession of the House of Brunswick that policy was departed from, and for a period of a century and a half there had not been a single Welsh Bishop in any of the sees of Wales. Could that condition of things have been possible but for the fact that the Church in Wales was connected with the State? There could be no doubt that what had rendered it possible for Englishmen to be appointed to the bishoprics and other high Church offices of Wales for a century and a half was the fact that the Church of England was connected with the State. Therefore the Church, so far from being improved and benefited by its connection with the State, was injuriously affected. The first objection made to the Bill was that it created a severence of the unity of the Church of England, and to support that objection the right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol went so far as to deny the nationality of the Welsh people. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that that kind of argument would not improve the position of the Church of Wales. In fact, sentiments of that kind, entertained by Churchpeople, had gone a long way to destroy the influence of the Church in the Principality. And what had the right hon. Gentleman advanced in support of the statement that there was no such thing as Welsh nationality? He had said it was contrary to history. But one of the main arguments of the other side was that the Welsh Church had existed long before the English Church. And if that were so, surely it was due to the separate nationality of Wales? Wales was close to England, far closer to England than Ireland. There was no St. George's Channel or any other channel between Wales and England; but, despite the fact that Wales was so close to England, the national sentiment was stronger in Wales than in any other portion of the United Kingdom. It was not so difficult for parts of the United Kingdom which lay far from England to preserve their nationality. The English were a very strong people, and unless the feeling of nationality was exceedingly strong it could not have been preserved in a country so near to England as Wales was. Yet, with regard to language, national sentiment, literature, and every badge of nationality that could be named, the feeling was far stronger in Wales than it was in Ireland or Scotland.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): Does the hon. Member give up Monmouthshire?

*MR. EVANS replied that he did not, because Monmouthshire was a Welsh county till the time of Henry VIII. It was claimed as an English county by the right hon. Gentleman, but Monmouthshire in feeling was Welsh, and not English, and desired to be allied with Wales in this matter. Did it not show the strength of the national feeling that, although this county had been annexed from Wales and joined to England, yet it still desired to remain Welsh? The biggest majority in any single-member constituency in Wales, or, indeed, in the United Kingdom, in favour of this measure was from West Monmouthshire, where the present Member was returned by a majority of over 5,000. He thought the supporters of the Church in Wales would not be wise to continue the argument that there was no such thing as Welsh nationality. The fact was that if the Welsh Church had not joined the English Church, and had not been subjected to the See of Canterbury, it would have been much stronger than it was at the present day. The attention the Welsh Church had received from its foster-mother, the English Church, had almost smothered it. The next argument against the Bill was that, if the Church was anti-national in old times, those times had changed, and that they had, since 1868, had Welsh-speaking Bishops. Yes; but they knew from experience that a Welsh-speaking Bishop was not necessarily a bishop who was actuated by national sentiments. He was not quite sure that one of the Welsh-speaking Bishops recently appointed was not as anti-national as any man they could find in the Principality. A third argument was that they had not got a religious census. But if they had a census, and showed they had a majority in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment, would those who clamoured for an inquisitorial census join in granting

Disestablishment? And he had to ask what majority would suffice, in the opinion of the Opposition, to declare the wishes of the people of the Principality in this matter? How was the census to be taken? Was it to be taken of Churchmen against Nonconformists. Because, as had been pointed out by the hon. Member for South Edinburgh, there were numbers of Churchmen in Wales who were in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment; therefore, a census on that basis would not avail. But really the objection of the other side, that the House ought not to pass this measure because they had no census, was what the lawyers called a dilatory plea. What was the use of saying they had not got a census, unless, if they showed by means of a census that the vast majority were in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment, gentlemen opposite were prepared to concede the right of the Welsh people to such a measure? The fourth argument was that, whether they had Disestablishment or not, Disendowment was wrong, because it would cripple and destroy the Church. The words made use of by the right hon. Member for West Bristol on this point the previous night were significant. He said:—

> "The theory of the Church is that there shall be a resident minister in every parish."

And the right hon. Gentleman went on to say (no doubt from his intimate knowledge of the zeal of his Party in Wales) that—

> "this work would not be done if they relieved the Church of the duty required by law to maintain a minister in every parish."

Why did the Church maintain a minister in every parish now? Was it out of desire for the good of the people, or because it was compelled by law to perform that duty? He did not believe of the Church of England in Wales, or the Church of England in England either, that the Church would cease to be active in the performance of religious work when it ceased to be trammelled by the State, and he confessed he was rather astounded to hear, from such a champion of the Church as the right hon. Gentleman, that, in his opinion, the work of the Church would not be done in Wales if they relieved it from the duty required of it by law to carry on its religious functions. The last argument made against the Bill was that the Church was wakening up to the performance of her spiritual duty, and that she was active, increasing, and aggressive. He did not desire to wound the feelings of anyone, but he thought he could give a reason to account for the increased zeal and activity of the Church in this matter. He denied entirely that the Church had any more hold upon the Welsh nation now than it had 50 years ago. There was a greater bustling now, a greater publication of so-called facts and figures; but where was the centre of activity? It was not in the Principality itself—it was in No. 30, Parliament Street—the headquarters of the Church Defence Institution. Every one of the arguments used against the passing of this measure were alleged in the case of the Irish Church. He had no hesitation in saying that the case of the Welsh people in favour of Disestablishment was much stronger than the case of the Irish people ever was. But there were two arguments urged against Disestablishment in Ireland which would not apply to the case of Wales at all. In the Debates on the Irish Church Bill, a good deal was said about the solemn obligation entered into between the two countries by the Act of Union, that the Church should be one and indivisible. That did not apply here. The second argument which applied to Ireland, but which was not applicable to the Welsh Church, was the anti-Romish argument. It was said, in regard to Ireland, that they must keep up a Protestant establishment, or otherwise they would have that country subjugated to the yoke of Rome. The right hon. Member for Bristol, last night, admitted that the Irish Church had been benefited by Disestablishment and Disendowment.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: No, no.

*MR. S. T. EVANS: At any rate the right hon. Gentleman admitted that the Irish Church had derived some advantages from Disestablishment and Disendowment. What were the advantages? He said it had obtained freedom from interference by others outside the Church. Would not that be an advantage in Wales? Was not that a strong argument in favour of Disestablishment?

The second advantage was, that by Disestablishment and Disendowment they had introduced the laity element into the Church, which had given increased strength and vigour to it. That would apply equally to the case of Wales. The right hon. Gentleman might fairly have gone further, for there was no question at all that the Irish Church had improved since its Disestablishment and Disendowment in 1868. He found that the voluntary contributions received by the representative body since 1869, averaged £174,000 per annum, and that the total of the voluntary contributions received since 1869 to the present day reached the immense sum of £4,376,197. That surely showed some activity in the Disestablished Church. Again, in 1893, the income of the Irish Church exceeded the expenditure by £66,128. He had referred and met the arguments most often made against the Bill, but the real reasons why the opposition to the passing of this measure into law was so strenuous on the other side of the House, were divulged by the right hon. Baronet in one portion of his speech. In the first place, the right hon. Gentleman said they would cripple the Church by taking its Endowments away. That, for the purpose of brevity, he might refer to as the loaves-and-fishes reason. The second real reason was a political one. The right hon. Gentleman told them that a prediction had been made in the time of the Irish Church Debates that the revolution which commenced with the Church would go on to the Land and Home Rule, and, said the right hon. Gentleman, "the revolution had gone on to the Land and to Home Rule." Then were they to understand that the right hon. Baronet desired the continued connection between the Church and State in Wales in order to keep back reforms upon the land question, and in order to keep back, if Wales desired it, the boon of self-government? Were these the reasons? If they were, then it appeared that the State connection was desired, not for the sake of religion, not upon spiritual grounds at all, but for political reasons, to stave off land reforms and reforms in local government. He would very briefly go through some of the reasons why they who supported the Bill contended that it ought to be passed. First of all, he affirmed, as one of the representatives of the Welsh people, that their motives for their strong desire for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church were not the mean motives attributed to them by the other side. They desired that there should be absolute freedom in the matter of religion, and absolute religious equality in the eye of the law. The hon. Member who last addressed the House said the fact that 31 Members from Wales were in favour of the measure was not an argument that ought to be acceded to. They had heard in the course of this Debate that the Welsh Members were not elected on the question of Disestablishment. He should like to know, then, upon what they were elected? He thought it worth while to read to the House again what Lord Salisbury wrote in the *National Review* for November 1892. Of course, his lordship then desired to prove that Wales was not in favour of Home Rule, and he wrote—

> "It is notorious that the Welsh voted for Radical Candidates, not for their love of Home Rule, but for their aversion towards the Welsh Church."

That was the opinion of Lord Salisbury as to the question upon which the Welsh representatives were returned to Parliament. Elaborate figures on this subject had been prepared by the Bishop of St. Asaph. They had heard a great deal about episcopal logic, and episcopal arithmetic was also very extraordinary arithmetic. He would give the House a specimen of how the Bishop dealt with this matter. He told them that during the last General Election the number of Liberals who voted for Gladstonian candidates, and who, therefore, voted in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment, was 145,818; that the number who voted in favour of the Unionist candidates—(where there was no contest, the figures at the previous election being taken)—was 86,883; and he made out, therefore, that the majority of electors in Wales, in favour of Disestablishment was only 58,935. Out of the total electorate of Wales that was, he thought, a tolerably large and satisfactory majority. But the majority was very much more than that. The Bishop assumed that all the Unionist candidates, and all those who voted for them at the last election, were against

Disestablishment and Disendowment. But that was not the fact. It was a very significant thing that in most of the election addresses of the Unionist candidates at the General Election of 1892 there was an ominous silence on the question of the Welsh Church. It might be said, therefore, that the question was not before the constituencies. But it was. There was not a Liberal candidate who did not put it in the forefront of his programme. Not only were many of the Unionist addresses silent; some of them actually expressed themselves to be favourable to Disestablishment. Those who expressed themselves in favour of Disestablishment were Mr. Morgan Lloyd in Anglesey, Mr. William Jones in Cardiganshire, Sir J. J. Jenkins in Carmarthen, Captain Davies in Carmarthenshire, Mr. Humphreys in the Eifion Division of Carnarvon, Mr. Owen in Merioneth, and Mr. Monger in Swansea District. In Flintshire Sir Robert Cunliffe, the Unionist candidate, could not make up his mind; but he thought it to his advantage to say that he would not vote against Disestablishment. Accordingly, upon a question that had been boiling in Wales for the last quarter of a century, he said he was going to be neutral. The total number of votes recorded for the Unionist candidates who declared in favour of Disestablishment was 17,378, and according to the Bishop's method that number must be deducted from the 86,883 and added to the other side. If they did the result would be that instead of a majority of 58,935 they had a majority of 93,691. Who were the candidates who were silent on the subject? In Cardiff there was Mr. Gunn, in Denbigh there was Mr. Kenyon. Where was the hon. Member? He used to be the champion of the Welsh Church in the House, but his voice has not been heard in this Debate. In Denbighshire there was Sir Watkin Wynn, in East Glamorganshire Mr. Lewis, in South Glamorganshire Sir Morgan Morgan, in Montgomeryshire Captain Mytton, in Pembroke Boroughs General Laurie, in Pembrokeshire Sir C. Phillips, in Radnorshire Mr. Bradney, and in Swansea Sir John Llewelyn. [An hon. MEMBER: "He was against Disestablishment."] I know he was, but why did he not say in his address that he was against it? What was significant was that when Unionists and Conservatives wished to catch votes they took care to exclude from their addresses their objection to Disestablishment, because if they put it in the people would not vote for them. There were seven Unionist and Conservative candidates actually in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment; 10 of them were silent in their addresses, only seven said anything against it, and one was neutral. What, then, became of the Bishop of St. Asaph's figures when applied to the electoral statistical argument in defence of the Church. In his book the Bishop says that 53 per cent. of the electorate had not voted for Disestablishment candidates. Will it be believed that in this percentage he has included thousands of duplicate votes, and has reckoned all those persons who had removed, and even all persons on the registers who had died! A census had been asked for in order to reckon as supporters of the Establishment "those respectable people who did not attend the Church or accept its ordinances." Surely, the only fair test was the test of Church membership. And upon this question they had figures given by the authorities of the of the Church of England themselves. According to the "Official Year Book" for 1894, the number of estimated communicants in the four dioceses of Wales was 120,477 or only 6·6 per cent. of the whole population. Had the Church a claim on the numerical ground to call itself a National Church when it estimated the number of its communicants at one out of every 15 of the population? It may be safely assumed that at the present juncture the number is not under-estimated in the Church Year Book. Taking the adherent argument, and applying the same multiplication table as that used by the Bishop of St. Asaph with regard to Nonconformists, they found that the number of adherents of the Church of England was 265,050, or 14 per cent. of the population—one person out of every seven. Much was made of the argument that in populous places, where the Church was to some extent a voluntary Church, she was increasing and improving. Look at Llandaff, which comprises the two most populous counties in the Principality, Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire. The number of communicants in the diocese was 41,407, or 5·2 per cent. of the population, and the number of adherents was 82,814, or 11 per cent. The number of communicants, according to the most recent returns, in the four great Nonconformist bodies in Wales, was 399,662, or 22·4 per cent. of the population. It therefore came to this, that of the communicants both of the Church and of these four great denominations, the Church had 22·7 per cent. and the Nonconformists 77·3 per cent. There was another test of whether or not the Church from a numerical point of view could claim to be a national Church. That was the test of church accommodation. If a Church had not accommodation for the people, surely it could not call itself the Church of the people. What was the sitting accommodation of the Church of England in Wales, reckoning parish churches and chapels of ease? According to the "Official Year Book," the Church accommodation in the diocese of Bangor was 18,707, or 27 per cent. of the population of the diocese; in the diocese of Llandaff it was 110,474, or 13 per cent. of the population; in the diocese of St. Asaph it was 79,343, or 29 per cent.; and in St. Davids it was 119,253, or 24 per cent. Thus the total accommodation in the churches and chapels of ease in the four dioceses was only 367,776, or a little over 20 per cent. of the population. Could they upon that ground say that the Church was a national Church. These figures were absolutely incontrovertible. No arithmetic, even of a Bishop. could change their effect. It was a significant fact that whereas, taking the number of communicants, the proportion of the Church to Nonconformists was 22 to 77 in 1894, according to the official census of 1851 the proportion of Church attendants then was 21 to 78, or practically the same. Surely, that was some evidence that there was not such an increase as was attempted to be made out in the proportion of members of the Church of England. Hon. Members opposite were fond of saying that Nonconformity was going back. That is not true. Nonconformity was stronger to-day than it ever had been. Taking the last 22 years there had been an increase as follows in the number of communicants in the four Nonconformist denominations:—Baptists, 54 per cent.; Methodists, 46 per cent.; Independents, 40 per cent.; and Wesleyans, 37 per cent. Was that a record of Nonconformist retrogression? If the Church could show better progress than was proved by those figures, he would be glad to hear of it from some hon. Gentleman opposite. It was a significant fact that not a single Member from the Principality had yet spoken in this Debate against the Bill. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen did not get their information from Wales, but in a book, which was published by the Bishop of St. Asaph, and which the opponents of the Bill were fond of referring to. Nonconformity in Wales was described in that book as "a fitful and feverish parenthesis in the religious life of Wales." Were the figures which he had quoted indicative of "a fitful and feverish parenthesis?" If so, all he could say was that the fit was tolerably long, and the fever was tolerably strong. But, referring to the number of chapels in Wales, in order further to test that statement of the Bishop, he found the following extraordinary figures: In 1775, there were in Wales 171 chapels; in 1816, there were 993; in 1861, the number had increased to 2,927; and in 1892, it had further increased to no less than 4,262. All those chapels had been erected voluntarily by the Welsh people themselves and by their forefathers. Were hon. Members opposite afraid, in face of those figures, to trust the people of Wales to take care of their own spiritual needs? He must pass very lightly over the question of Disendowment, because he was afraid of trespassing too long upon the attention of the House, to which he was indebted for the patient attention it had given to him. One thing he observed, and that was, that surely in these days nobody would propose Disestablishment without Disendowment. In the proposed referendum to Scotland the two parts were not separated; neither were they separated in the case of Ireland. Upon the principle of Disendowment, there could, in his view, be no two opinions. If the Church was to be Disestablished, it must also be Disendowed. Hon. Members had a perfect right, of course, to get from the Government the best terms they could. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for West Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach), had said that the provisions in the Bill in regard to Disendowment were "mean." This he entirely denied. He and his friends held that, not only were those provisions not mean, but they were very generous, and he thought that the Church would do well to accept such a scheme as that propounded by the Bill, because better terms would never be obtained. The right hon. Gentleman went into figures to show what he called the meanness of the scheme now put forward. He complained that it did not allow any commutation. Ireland had taught them better than to do that. Did they want to see a flight of curates crossing Offa's Dyke? He quite thought that when a man did the work he was entitled to the benefits; but, if he did not do the work, or get some one else to do it, what right had he to commute? While men performed the duties attaching to their life interests, they were entitled to the benefits, and the Bill provided a too generous scheme for persons desiring to go from one post to another; but, if a clergyman wanted to go from one place to another, or to be made a Bishop, he failed to see why he should receive any portion of his life interest at all. The Bill, however, allowed him to do so, and to apply to such a provision the term "mean" was absurd. The right hon. Gentleman said that the treatment of the curates was also mean; but he said that the meanest provisions of all were those in reference to the cathedrals and churchyards of Wales. The right hon. Gentleman said that in the churchyards the members of the Church of England had what was once nearest and dearest to them. He would be the first to recognise any sentiment of that kind. But in many places in Wales, the only burial ground was the parish churchyard, and Nonconformists had, in those burial grounds, those who were once nearest and dearest to them. Nonconformists had been for generations in an undoubted majority in Wales, and had, therefore, in many of those burial grounds a larger number of those who had been nearest and dearest to them and their families than Churchmen had. It was not proposed to desecrate them. God forbid! All that they contended for was, that in those public burial grounds, all ought the have an equal interest, without reference to their particular form of religious belief. It was trifling for the right hon. Gentleman to say that such a provision was the meanest in the whole scheme of Disendowment contained in the Bill. He wished to say a few words as to the secularisation of the property, and setting free of revenues. He would not use his own words, but would quote words of an eminent Churchman which he thought were both apposite and eloquent. They were to be found in—

> "LOMBARD STREET IN LENT.—A Sermon by the Rev. R. L. Ottley, Principal of Pusey House, Oxford, on THE ETHICS OF PROPERTY.'"

and were as follows:—

> "There are works distinctively religious as well as social. For example, the care of the sick, and dying, and the afflicted is a religious work. Hospital, homes for incurables, etc., owe their origin to the Christian spirit, and few services are more Christlike than the founding of dispensaries and convalescent homes, or the endowment of parish nurses to visit and tend the poor in their own homes."

Would not everyone agree with those words? They might have been spoken with reference to the schedule to this very Bill. No one could say, with any propriety of language that the application of funds to such purposes as were there mentioned was an application to non-religion purposes. The Church of England had had many opportunities. He hoped she would, even now, learn a lesson from the case of Wales. He appealed to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and assured them that so far as the non-conformists of Wales were concerned, they desired to see an end to all this strife, bitterness, and controversy. He hoped that the Church would learn the lesson that her very failure in Wales was due to her establishment. She had had her opportunities as an Established Church. Once, she appealed to the people of Wales: she had ceased to appeal to them now. She had failed to embrace the opportunities which had been offered to her as an Established Church. She would have, as soon as this Bill passed, an opportunity of becoming a free Church, not leaning on the secular arm, and not relying on the broken reed of political privileges. Let her join in putting an end to all the strife and controversy, and as a free Church, untrammeled and unfettered, go forward, hand-in-hand, with all other religious agencies in the

Principality to promote the highest and noblest interests of the nation.

*MR. HENRY MATTHEWS (Birmingham, E.) said, that the hon. Member had approached the subject in a very becoming manner. He trusted that the House would listen to him while, from a somewhat different point of view he, a dissenter also from the Established Church, explained the reasons why he agreed with the bulk of his Friends on that side of the House in opposing the Bill. He did not think that any advantage was to be gained by entering into any long inquiry as to the legal or moral right of Parliament to entertain such questions as this. The legal right was beyond question, and precedents in support of it were numerous. He should not be inclined to accept that of the Irish Church if it stood alone, for the case of that Church and the case of the Established Church in Wales differed enormously. He would not labour the point. It had been established by the ight hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, with a force that he could not attempt to follow. But while conceding to the Home Secretary that there was abundant precedent for the interference of Parliament, the question still remained whether that interference was wise and just in the particular case; and when they were dealing with the Church of England, which certainly had a prolonged life and an illustrious past behind it, and which certainly had a great hold on the affections of large numbers of people throughout this country, a much stronger case must be made out than when they were dealing with any other institution. The Bill contained two distinct parts: Disestablishment and Disendowment; and each ought to be approached in a different spirit, standing as they did on different grounds. The picture presented by the Home Secretary of the former condition of Establishment in the English Church and of its present condition was accurate in the main. He differed from the Home Secretary in this regard upon only one or two minute points, which he would presently mention. It was perfectly true that the old ideal of State and Church, which he confessed was, in his opinion, the best ideal, had long been abandoned and given up in this country. There was no question now of exclusion from citizenship of all those who did not profess to follow a particular religion. That ideal had long since ceased to exist. There was a time when entrance into Parliament, the right to hold any office in the State, the possession of municipal rights, marriage, burial, and all that appertained to public grants to schools, and the social and civil life of the community was the exclusive patronage and property of the Established Church. That state of things was long ago felt to be totally inconsistent with the religious condition of the country. He agreed that Establishment in that sense had long been gone. The Home Secretary asked what Establishment meant, and on his own showing Establishment inflicted no grievance and no injury on anyone. Let him develop that for a moment. What did Establishment consist in? In the first place, in the supremacy of the Crown, in the appointment of Bishops, in the assembling and dissolving of Convocation, the control of the Crown over every Canon that Convocation might pass, and the interference of Parliament. This latter followed on the supremacy of the Crown. Said the Home Secretary, these were all chains and fetters which were injurious to the Church of England, they put her under the heel and control of latitudinarian Ministers, and of a Parliament filled with men of all religions and no religion at all. If he were a member of the Church of England he thought he should take that view, but it was for every man to choose. There were many members of the Church of England who viewed this secular control as a great privilege and a great advantage. But Dissenters were not subjected to any of these chains and fetters. They were free to carry on their public worship in any way they pleased, and according as their conscience dictated, uncontrolled and unhampered by those fetters. The second point put by the Home Secretary was, that there were Bishops in the House of Lords. He thought that was only an incident of Establishment. They refused to allow clergymen to sit in the House of Commons, and the views of the Church could be heard only in the House of Lords. The hon. Member who has just sat down viewed this as a nuisance and an evil that the Bishops should sit in the House of Lords, and that their conduct there had been wrong. He did not agree with him. He thought it a valuable thing that the Church should be represented in the House of Lords. He should not object to seeing all the religious sects represented in the House of Lords, for by that system of levelling up they would get rid of the difficulty. But that the presence of the Bishops was a grievance to Dissenters he could not admit for a moment, and on that ground there was no argument in favour of Disestablishment. As to coercive jurisdiction, it did not affect Dissenters. It affected no one but the clergy. It was not a grievance to any layman, as the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts did not touch any one but the clergy. To take away this coercive jurisdiction would deprive the Church of an advantage, if they liked, which she had for many years but which had done no injustice to those outside the Church. "Oh, but—" said the Home Secretary,

> "—this Bill substitutes for the coercive jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts the jurisdiction of the ordinary Courts of the Realm."

No one who followed the working of the Ecclesiastical Courts could avoid seeing how idle that idea was. Anyone who remembered the Gorham case and the Liddell case, and similar cases, would feel how difficult and complex the points that were raised were, and what a peculiar kind of learning was required to deal with them. What was the meaning of contractual jurisdiction? It meant that if a particular clergyman had gone against his contractual obligations the question must be tried by a jury. If a case of that kind were to go to a jury, perhaps of Dissenters, upon some point of doctrine, would that be satisfactory to the Church? Would it be conducive to that kind of discipline which the Church had hitherto been able to enforce? He entirely disagreed that it would, and he did not say that without some experience. He thought if these cases were raised before a Welsh jury they would get a short shrift. He could not agree with the Home Secretary that the legal remedy for tithe was an incident of Establishment. Tithes had preceded Establishment. Tithe was the grant of individuals to the Church, made out of their own resources, enforced on them, perhaps, by custom and religious conviction, but coming from their own private resources and assuming the nature of a grant. That grant constituted property, and it carried with it a legal remedy. The conclusion, therefore, was, that there was no grievance arising out of it. All the circumstances led him to oppose the proposal of the Government, but when he considered the manner in which Disestablishment was to be carried out by the Bill his opposition became stronger. It was proposed to make the Church of Wales distinct from the Church of England. Her Majesty would no longer be the head of the Church of Wales. It would be governed by a strange body, consisting of clergy and laity. Then it would no longer be the Church of England; it would be a completely different Church. It was a new Church, as distinct from the Church of England as possible. They did not know how the majority of the laity at this general council was to be got at. They had the nominations of Bishops in their hands and could appoint to benefices; in fact, the whole Church in Wales would be handed over to a new body, and Her Majesty would no longer be at the head of that portion of the Church of England. There was one most whimsical provision in the Bill which he did not understand. That was the provision that the Archbishop of Canterbury was not to be bound by this general council without his consent. He really should like to know what this meant? According to the Bill this new Disestablished Church was started with a contractual but not a legal appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The first thing the general council would do would probably be to do away with that appeal. Supposing the Archbishop said: "I do not consent;" what would be the result? Did his contractual appeal remain, or was it gone? There seemed to him to be objections to the Disestablishment part of this Bill which he confessed he could not get over. He turned now to Disendowment. Here, again, he would strive to use no words that could offend the most delicate susceptibility. He would not talk about sacrilege. There were abundant precedents in our history for Parliament interfering with the property of the Church. There were few things to which they could look back with more humiliation than to those incidents between the reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, when Parliament chopped and changed, and apparently both the great bulk of the laity and the clergy changed with them. If they compared the times of Henry VII. with those of Charles II. it would be found that funds given to one body were, after a time, and in the course of changing fortune, devoted to the support of another creed. But even in Church matters he supposed that there was something like prescription; and the Church had now been in the long enjoyment of those endownments. He would not conceive that Parliament was justified in dealing with property of that kind except on grounds stronger and better than those which induced Parliament to deal with the property of the private individual. There was certainly not less sacredness in this property, which was devoted to religious and sacred uses; and it ought to be not less guarded and watched over by Parliament than the property of the private individual. In the case of the private individual Parliament would not take his property without giving him adequate compensation, nor unless a case were made out of some overwhelming public mischief that was caused by the property in his hands, or some overwhelming public benefit that was to be secured by taking his property. Could it be said that in the case of the Welsh Church either of these circumstances had been made out? Was there any overwhelming public mischief resulting from the present benefices in Wales? He noticed that in the return these were very small. A benefice of £400 a year was a rare exception; and as for the purposes to which that property was devoted every one agreed they were good and even sacred purposes. He was aware that hon. Members said they were purposes which were limited in their scope, and were applied to too small a number of the population of Wales. He was aware of that, but he maintained that there was no public mischief which could be traced directly the possession of property by the Church. That reason for diverting the property therefore seemed to him to fail. As for the public benefit, he would not waste time in examining the purposes to which it was proposed to devote the money according to the Bill. But he might ask whether anyone would venture to vote for a measure to take away the property of a private individual without compensation in order to found a parish hall or a parish museum? Were those purposes which would justify an interference with the property of a private individual, however obnoxious he might be? The Government could not find an example of such action being taken without compensation, in the whole range of their Legislation. It was said there was compensation and that the Bill saved existing interests. The Home Secretary made a strong point to this effect, that the Church had no property of her own; that the whole of her property belonged in reality either to the Bishops, the Chapters, or individual beneficiaries. That was legally and technically true; but in answer to the point he submitted that it was a miserable technical quibble. Was it not manifest that the Church had this interest in the Endowments, that she had secured by law, that there shall be attached to her benefices, a perpetual succession of men who were her ministers, who belonged to her ranks, and kept alive her doctrine and her faith? That was a strong and living interest enough to deserve the attention of Parliament. The Government had even gone farther in this Bill. They had aimed what seemed to him to be a malignant blow at the Church, when they had forbidden the system of commutation. They had prevented the Established Church from acquiring a fund through the zeal and the self-sacrifice of her own servants; they had been forbidden to provide any fund of which they might avail themselves in the future. Indeed, the Government had arranged this scheme of Disendowment on principles so capricious that, apart from other grounds, he should be unable to assent to it. The Churches and the parsonages were to go to the Disestablished Church, but not the cathedrals. By what method did they draw this distinction? Were not both meant for the same service, and was not the existence of both equally due to the contributions of the members of the Established Church? But the cathedrals were to be handed over to commissioners, who were not even to be members of the Church, and who were at perfect liberty to dispose of them for any secular purpose they thought fit, in addition to the purpose of worship according to the rites of the Church of England if requested. The Government admitted that the private benefactions since 1703, were to remain with the Disestablished Church: but that everything before that date was to be taken. What rational explanation of that distinction had been given by the Home Secretary or by anyone else? In principle it was said that what had been given by a private person out of his resources, ought to go to the Disestablished Church if given since 1703. On what ground did they not include tithe? Was tithe not contributed out of private resources? Did the perpetuity of tithe make it less a private donation or a private contribution to the Church? Surely not; a rent charge would be as private and as perpetual as tithe was itself. Legal remedies which had been provided in respect of tithe did not make it less private; and, in his judgment, there were no circumstances which took tithe out of the list of private benefactions. But the line was to be drawn at 1703, which was the year of Queen Anne's Bounty. He thought the Government had been ill-advised in calling up the memory of Queen Anne in this matter; but the Home Secretary adhered to the date of 1703 because it only then became possible (he said) to invest in land for ecclesiastical purposes. With all respect to the Home Secretary, that was a total misrepresentation of the fact. All that the Act of Queen Anne did was to dispense with the licence in mortmain if the lands were assigned to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty. It did not benefit any other Ecclesiastical Corporation in the country. These were blots in this scheme of Disendowments independently of those which must attach to any such scheme. And the reasons in favour of this Bill had failed to satisfy him. The Home Secretary put in the forefront of his reasons for the Bill, that the Welsh Church was denationalised and had become an alien Church. He admitted that it had, in the first instance, sprung from the genius and faith of the Welsh people; but he said that it had been laid hold of by English authorities, and by men who had no interest in Wales. The right hon. Gentleman insisted that the Church was denationalised for the purpose of abolishing it; but its property remained national always, for the purpose of diversion. The right hon. Gentleman read a most interesting passage from Giraldus Cambriensis, showing how the Welsh chiefs had written to Pope Innocent III. to ask him to save them from the rapacious Norman Bishops. But this was going a long way back for an indictment against the National Church in Wales. He could quote most harrowing passages about the making of the New Forest by William the Conqueror, but he did not suppose that the House would listen to them as an argument for the Disestablishment of the Queen of England. Then the right hon. Gentleman boldly jumped over seven or eight centuries and came to the English Bishops who would not ordain itinerant preachers. He believed that they could not have done so without violating the Rubrics and discipline of their Church. But, be that as it might, it was hardly so monstrous a thing that it turned the Church into an alien and denationalised Church. When he came to the present state of the Church, the Home Secretary admitted that it was not open to censure. It was full of men who spoke the language of the country and who were zealous in the discharge of their duties. It certainly was not burdened with pluralists or with swollen and bloated emoluments. But it was urged that the Church was the Church of a minority. To him that question seemed to be a little in doubt still. He did not doubt that the Nonconformists in Wales were more numerous than the members of the Church of England, but how much they were more numerous was extremely doubtful. The Home Secretary quoted figures as to the number of communicants and children at the Sunday schools; but he carefully avoided any figures which told in the opposite direction. The children of some parents might not be sent to Sunday school with the regularity which was desirable; but marriage was something common to all denominations, and the marriages in the Established Church were 46,000 as compared with 33,000 in the Noncomformist denominations. Of course, on this question, everyone must be guessing, because hon. Gentlemen opposite refused to have a religious census. But, at any rate, the Church of England had more adherents than anyone of the several Nonconformists denominations; and if they were less numerous than all the Nonconformists put together, they were not very much less numerous. For he noticed that the total number of adherents claimed by the Nonconformists bodies themselves was less than half of the total population; and, therefore, though he did not claim all of the remaining half as belonging to the Church, yet it was probable that that was not very much above the mark. But it was not sufficient to say that the Church was in a minority. It was a substantial minority at any rate; and it was in possession of an old and venerable title. When before had the House of Commons been asked to declare that the property of the minority was to be at the mercy of the majority? The owners of land and capital were in a minority, and no doubt the "have nots," who were in a majority, would like to have their property; but he had never heard that that was sufficient ground for dispossessing the minority. There was another argument which the Home Secretary, to his credit, did not use, but which was put forward by the Prime Minister and the President of the Board of Trade. It was, that poverty was a good thing for the Church, and that, therefore, the Government were, by this Bill, conferring a blessing in disguise. Lord Rosebery had not shrunk from telling an audience in Wales that the spiritual essence of the Church was produced by poverty; that it was produced in the manger and in the carpenter's shop. That was a very mean and unworthy argument. Lord Rosebery forgot to say that in primitive times poverty and humbleness were the lot, not only of the Christian Minister and the Church, but of the laity as well; and that a Christian of unbounded possessions would have been an impossibility in those days. But when Christianity emerged from those primitive times, and came to embrace the rich as well as the poor, then Christians increased their gifts to the temple, and did not stint the labourer's hire; and the Church grew rich with, and by the laity. This argument of the Prime Minister was really extremely mean. All modern experience led to the conclusion that a moderate Endowment to the clergy was, if not indispensable, a most important condition to the independent and fearless discharge of their highest duties. If he wanted proof of that he should turn to the history of one of the noblest of the voluntary Churches, the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland—a Church rich in examples of perseverence under the bitterest persecutions and the greatest difficulties, but the devoted clergy of which, dependent on their flocks as they were, had been dragged after them. [*Nationalist interruption*, and *cries of* "Dungarvan!" from Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL.] The President of the Board of Trade had repeated the argument that poverty was a good thing for the Church. Lord Rosebery, referring to the Church in Wales, said, "See the spiritual benefit we shall confer upon her." Were the Government and their supporters prepared to apply that sauce to the Church of England in England? Were they prepared to apply the same stimulant to the Dissenting bodies? If poverty was such a good thing for reanimating and blowing up to fever heat the zeal of a Christian clergy, would they serve the same sauce to every religious establishment in the country? The truth was, the real reason for this Bill, was that there were 31 Welsh votes to be given to the Government. He admitted that the majority of the electors of Wales were in favour of this measure, but that was a recent majority. It was not many years ago that the majority was the other way. He had not the exact figures at hand, but less than 25 years ago he believed that only nine Welsh Members supported a Resolution to the same effect as this Bill. The change, therefore, was so recent that it ought not to influence their decision. Moreover, he was clearly of opinion that this was not solely a Welsh question. The wishes and desires of the Welsh people should be listened to, but he denied that they ought to be decisive. The proposition that Wales was a nation which was entitled to receive separate treatment, and ought to receive separate treatment, he challenged. The Welsh were a distinct race, and one of several races which constituted our joint national life. If they admitted there was a Welsh nation entitled to deal piecemeal with the Church, how could they refuse to admit that that nation was entitled to deal piecemeal with the Constitution? How many of the 31 Welsh Members who now supported the Government were in favour of Home Rule for Wales? All of them, no doubt. Therefore, if their demand were to be decisive upon one point it must be equally decisive on the other. That was, he confessed, one of the grounds upon which he should most certainly vote against the Second Reading of this Bill. He looked upon it as a Bill that undermined the national unity of the kingdom, and disturbed perfectly legitimate interests without any adequate cause and for the sake of the Party exigencies of the Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, he was prepared to agree with the right hon. Gentleman's first proposition—namely, that Disestablishment in itself was not necessarily out of the pale of right and justice, but that it depended on circumstances whether it was to be condemned or to be approved. In this case the right hon. Gentleman could not approve it, and said that Establishment was not a grievance and injury to Dissenters. The right hon. Gentleman must have forgotten some of the most stirring facts of the religious history of this country, and what were the motives of the men whose energy and devotion, or, as hon. Members opposite might perhaps say, whose fanaticism and obstinacy, had made that history what it was. What were the motives which actuated those who advocated this Bill? His hon. Friend the Member for Kingston gave two of those motives, and then withdrew the first. He said he was very glad to find that the advocacy of the Bill did not come from pecuniary greed, and that the Dissenters of Wales were no longer anxious to get the Church's money for their own body. The hon. Gentleman must be behind the times if he thought the Liberationists of this country were in favour of a concurrent endowment; they were just as little in favour of concurrent endowment as of concurrent representation in the House of Lords. The other motive given was social jealousy and envy. He thought all of them who were not Dissenters ought to pay their tribute to the motives which actuated the Welsh constituencies and Welsh Members in the demand for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Welsh Church. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol, said—

> "I should like to ask the Home Secretary to put himself in the place of those millions of English men and women who believe that Disestablishment is a wrong to the State, and that Disendowment is a wicked plunder of the Church. Let him think how they feel about this question."

What he would say was—

> "Let the right hon. Gentleman and hon. Gentlemen opposite put themselves in the place of the millions of Englishmen, Welshmen, and Scotchmen who think that the Establishment of the Church by the State is a wrong to religion, and that the Endowment of the Church, the Church of the minority, or, at any rate, of a part of the Nation, with those funds which were originally given for the benefit of the whole community, is an injustice done to the many for the advantage of the comparatively few."

Do not let hon. Gentlemen be deceived. Those feelings were deeply felt. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol said, his ideal State was a State which recognised the higher aspects of life by recognising an Established Church. What was the ideal of the Nonconformists and the Liberationists? Let him read two sentences, both of them taken from the Church that was dissident amongst Dissenting Churches, the United Presbyterian Assembly. The first was a very ancient sentence, written in the Articles of Faith of one of the two bodies now composing the United Presbyterian Church:—

> "The civil magistrate has no more right to dictate a religious creed to his subjects than they have to dictate a religious creed to him."

And the other sentence, which was archaic in its form, but not more archaic than a good deal read in the course of this Debate, was—

> "To own the magistrate's authority in spiritual things, and his right to employ the national resources for the support of any section of the Church, is to place Cæsar on the throne of Christ."

It was because this was a principal article of their creed that a great number of men for generations past had endured persecution and given up immense advantages. It was on these grounds that the attack on the Establishment of the Welsh Church was now inspired. As to Disendowment, let hon. Members place themselves in the position of men who believed that the tithe should not be devoted to the service of the Established Church. The tithe, it was said, was given for a religious purpose. Beyond all question; but by whom, and to whom, and for whom? It was given by the whole community to the whole community, for the religious purposes of the whole community. During the two centuries the tithe was practically given to the purposes of worship, he wished to know how many Dissenters there were, not in England or in Wales, but in the whole of Western Europe. The Church then was the Church of everybody; and that was not all; the Church was everything. The Church in early times was the one great centre of social and national life, and any money the State had to give for what it considered the highest purposes was given to the Church. To-day the State gave money for public education, for labourers' cottages, for the moral and social elevation of the community—but not one penny would henceforth be given for religious endowment. It had been said, with, he believed, a perfect belief in its truth, that Parliament had no more moral right to take one penny of those Endowments than it had to take the money of any Corporation, or Trade Union, or any society in this country, and the noble Lord the Member for Rochester had added railways to the list. It had been said, on the other side, that Professor Freeman had laid it down that—

> "the Church preached payment of tithe as a duty, and the State gradually came to enforce that duty by legal enactment;"

and the right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol, commenting on that statement, asked very plausibly—it was an argument that came home to everybody—

> "Is every source of income, the payment of which is enforced by legal enactment, therefore the property of the State?"

Every source of income that was enforced by legal enactment was not the property of the State; but a tax which was imposed by legal enactment was the property of the State. The State, in the case of an imposed tax, could remit it or increase it. He did not say that practically that was possible or right in the case of tithe; but most undoubtedly in the case of tithe, or of any other tax, the State might choose to what purpose it should be applied; and if there was one thing more certain than another it was that tithe, in the eyes of the Welsh farmers, was a tax different from every other tax, mainly and chiefly in this, that they did not think their consciences allowed them to pay it. He would like to know hew far hon. Gentlemen opposite could carry the argument that under no circumstances money which had been devoted to the Church could be alienated from the Church. If there were only 20, 10, or even 5 per cent. of the population of Wales Churchpeople, must every penny still go to the Church and be absolutely inalienable from it? But, as a matter of fact, it was not at all a question of majority or minority. The true Liberationist believed that in every case State endowment of religion was wrong; and he believed it was wrong for the highest reason, for he was convinced that the religion for which a man had to pay himself was more deeply felt by him than one that involved him in no such sacrifice. The Nonconformists of Wales had not only preached that doctrine, but they had practised it. It was disputed whether the Nonconformists of Wales were many or few. The supporters of the Bill placed their numbers very high; the opponents of the Bill belittled them; but no one disputed the large amount of money they contributed to their religion, and the lower they put the numbers of the Nonconformists the higher they placed their sacrifices in that respect. £400,000 a year was what these poor men—small shopkeepers, miners, and small farmers—contributed to maintain their chapels and pay their ministers; and even during times of agricultural and industrial depression not one word of complaint was ever heard from the ministers of those poor flocks. The right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol had said that the majority of Nonconformists in Wales was but a recent majority, and that the minority was growing very much in strength and in energy. His old friend the late Mr. Raikes, whom he deeply regretted he had not as an opponent in this Debate on the Welsh Church, once used a beautiful passage in regard to the proselytising character of the Welsh

Church:—"Hon. Gentleman opposite," said Mr. Raikes—

> "have very little knowledge of the history of any Church at all if they are not aware that the first note of any Church worthy of the name is that it is a proselytising Church and that no Church is of any use, either in heaven, or on earth, which is not a proselytising Church."

That was very true. But at whose cost did the Established Church in Wales proselytise? It proselytised at the cost of those Nonconformist bodies against which its efforts were being directed, and at the cost of those ministers whose flocks it was endeavouring—for the highest reasons and the highest purposes, he quite admitted—to draw away from them. The right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken had said they ought not to be in a hurry to pass this Bill, but that they ought to wait until the Church, by its proselytising works, had made itself, if not a majority, at least a more powerful body than it was now. But how long were they to wait? In the Debates on the Irish Church Bill an hon. Member made a calculation that it would take 4,000 years to convert Ireland to Protestantism. He supposed that to convert Wales to the Established Church would take at least four centuries, and during all that time the Welsh Dissenters and the Welsh Ministers were to go on paying tithes for the purpose of supporting a Church which was endeavouring to proselytise the Welsh from their way of religious thinking. A great deal was said about the Welsh Ministers being politicians; but how could they help being politicians when they were put in such a position? If they disestablished and disendowed the Church, and placed the Welsh Ministers on an equality of right with all other citizens, he thought they would very soon find that the Welsh Ministers would cease to be political, and would give themselves up entirely to the work of religious instruction. The right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol had said that the majority in Wales in favour of Disestablishment was but a recent majority, and that therefore so much importance ought not to be attached to it. It was, it was true, a recent majority. Thirty years ago no one would have thought it worth while to bring forward the question of Welsh Disestablishment in the House, for the minority of Welsh Members by whom it would have been supported would have been so small as to be almost ridiculous. In 1870, the question was raised, and only seven Welsh Members voted in its favour. He thought it was not too sanguine to expect that when the Debate closed 10 Welsh Members would vote for Disestablishment for every one that would vote against it. Such a state of things appeared to him to be the most convincing argument possible in favour of the Bill. There was one point which struck him very much in regard to Welsh feeling on this question; and that was that that feeling was seen much better outside Wales than in Wales. In Wales there existed a very powerful and aggressive Church—a Church which used, he would not say illegitimately, a very strong influence in order to increase the number of its adherents. Bu twhen a Welshman went outside Wales his religion was a matter for himself, and no one else cared about it. When the Welshman went to Liverpool he found 28 Chapels and two Churches in which the services were conducted in Welsh. In the United States he was informed the Welsh Episcopalian service was almost non-existent, but the number of Welsh Chapels were counted by hundreds, while it was said that in London there were 19 Welsh Chapels and two Welsh Churches. There was no doubt whatever what the feeling of Wales was in this matter. It was the same feeling that there would have been in Scotland if, at the end of the 17th century, the Episcopal Church had not been removed off the backs of the Scotch people. At the time of the Revolution, in the reign of Charles II., in the days of Claverhouse, Scotchmen did not seem to think much of those arguments which were now thought good enough for Welsh Nonconformists. And what Wales had to endure Ireland endured no longer. He knew that they had been told that the cases of Ireland and Wales were very different. Indeed, the right hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol went so far as to say, not only was that so, but that the example of Ireland ought to deter them, because, he said, political differences in Ireland had been deeper and more bitter since Disestablishment, and that the relations of Protestants and Roman Catholics had been more bitter than they ever were before. What might have been, it was always difficult to say, but he thought no one who had anything to do with the government of Ireland would agree with that view. What, say, in 1881, which he regarded as the culminating point of the Irish difficulty, would have been the state of Ireland if, at that moment, the tithe had been in existence in Ireland and they had been supporting there an established Protestant Episcopal Church? As regarded bitterness between Protestant and Catholic, he absolutely disbelieved it had increased. When he reflected what the feeling between Protestant and Catholic was in the old days, and looked now at the elections all over Ireland, and at the number of Protestants elected to offices of trust and emolument in purely Catholic boroughs, he did not believe that the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland had exacerbated feeling, but he believed it had very largely mitigated it. The right hon. Member for Bristol said the case of Ireland was also different because in Ireland religious endowments were taken away from the people and given over to the Church minority by legislative enactment. That, he dare say, was very true. But in Wales, as in Ireland, the endowments were originally given for the whole community. In Ireland those endowments were given to the Church of the minority by law; in Wales a great independent population grew up outside the Church. The origin of the situation in the past was different, but the present circumstances of Wales were the same as the circumstances in Ireland were at the time of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church. It was to that, as practical Members of Parliament, and not to any historical question of origin they should look. He wanted the House to consider for one moment the cruel position of Wales. She was obliged to bring all her wishes, desires, and claims to this House; she could not have a Parliament of her own and legislate for herself, and she came there to obtain what she considered was justice. There was a legislative measure which, if it was left for Welshmen to settle, would be settled by acclamation. They brought it to this House, and how were they met? They were met by the taunt that the Government was legislating for a section of its followers. The position of the Welsh was absolutely hopeless. They were a section in that House, it could not be denied, but if justice was not to be done to them because they were only a section, they were in a position which no community could possibly endure without the most bitter sense of wrong and injustice. They heard — and no doubt with truth—a good deal about the recent energy of the Church, the increased attendance in the Sunday schools, the increase in the Communicants, and the money spent on cathedrals and new churches. In the parish of Merthyr Tydvil he was told that in 15 years £40,000 had been spent on Church extension and £13,000 added to the endowments, and in Swansea, Cardiff, and Llanelly the work of Church extension had been carried on on the same scale. That was a very fine picture of energy and success, inspired by most honourable motives; but what lesson were they to draw from it? In Merthyr, where these magnificent results were produced, the tithe was £550 a year, and the population over 100,000 people. In Cardiff the tithe was £140 a year, in Swansea £140, and in Llanelly there was no tithe at all and a glebe of 120 acres. In these communities, with their immensely increasing population, the Church was in a position of a voluntary Church, and it was because she was in the position of a voluntary Church that she had made this very great and energetic movement. The right hon. Gentleman opposite said that it was mean in the extreme to cut the Welsh Church loose without Endowment and without sufficient adequate working machinery for enabling it to collect an Endowment for itself, and he blamed the Home Secretary for doing so. His right hon. Friend, in charge of this Bill, was a Scottish Member, and he knew very well what a Disestablished and Disendowed Church could do for itself. In the year 1843, 396 clergymen in Scotland put their names to two documents by which, in one single day, they sacrificed £100,000 of annual stipend. They were not disestablished and disendowed by Act of Parliament; they disestablished and disendowed themselves, and it was done as completely, as effectively, much more suddenly, and with less warning than was done by Act of Parliament. But that was not all. They had not the advantages which the Welsh clergymen would have if this Bill became law. They had no life interests, the manses were not handed over to them, and churches and everything had to be provided by the people. What was the result? The first care was to provide an income on which the various ministers might live. That great organiser and apostle, Dr. Chalmers, laid down the principle that each congregation was to do its part in sustaining the whole, and that the whole was to sustain each congregation. That sentence, he believed, was the origin of a name that would be famous in religious history—the name of the Sustentation Fund. And what was the Sustentation Fund? At the first assembly £17,000 was subscribed for this purpose, and by the end of the first year £61,000. The average of the first ten years was £84,000 a year, of the next ten years £108,000, of the next ten £130,000, and for many years past the Sustentation Fund had amounted to from £175,000 to £180,000 a year. As he had said, they had also to build Churches and manses. The first year, for Church buildings, they provided £104,000, the next year £123,000, and the third year, £131,000. In four years, more than 700 Churches were built, and that was not all. In those days education was Denominational, and it was considered by every religious body that it was necessary for its existence and its absolute duty to educate the people according to its own views. Six hundred schools were built by the Free Church at a cost of £220,000. The missionaries of the Presbyterian Church abroad for the most part took up their lot with the Free Church—the greatest and most famous missionaries of modern days among them—and on home and foreign missions, at this moment, £140,000 a year was spent. The Free Church of Scotland brought in £600,000 a year, and this was only one of the four great Churches which divided the wealth of Scotland between them. He made no reference to that part which belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, the four great churches in Scotland divided the wealth of the country, while the case of the Episcopal Church of Wales was that of a Church which might very properly be said to monopolise the real capital wealth of the country. Voluntaryism had already accomplished marvels in Wales. It had founded that great religious Nonconformist machinery to which the great mass of the people owed their opportunities for religious worship and instruction. It had likewise been at the bottom of the church extension in those great populous districts where the Church was Disestablished and Disendowed only in name, and if the Church was Disestablished and Disendowed, and put on a level with other Churches, the same forces would work more thoroughly, more rapidly, and more universally for good than at present. But, apart from and above those considerations, Parliament was asked whether it was prepared to remove that grievance which, years ago, he characterised—and, he believed, rightly characterised—as the most signal injustice that was still left unredressed, and he could not understand how any man who held, or had ever held Liberal opinions, could for a moment hesitate on which side he would vote in this great and righteous controversy.

*MR. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University) thought the Home Secretary would be one of the first to acknowledge that the Bill raised one of the most important subjects, and one of the largest issues that could be submitted to the consideration of Parliament or the country. The character of the Debate throughout confirmed this statement He should like to know why the Government had raised this enormous subject at the present time, bearing in mind the many serious and important social questions on which the country was asking earnestly for the guidance of Parliament —questions on which there might be difference of opinion, but in regard to which all were agreed that something practical and beneficial might be done. And what real advantage was to be gained by raising this vast, far-reaching issue in regard to the Church? The Home Secretary, in a speech which commanded their admiration, and which raised the Debate at the opening to that high tone in which they would desire to approach a subject of this kind—had said, the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales was a matter that was ardently and passionately desired, but he omitted to say that it was likewise quite as ardently and passionately opposed. If there was a passionate desire on the part of some people in Wales for the Measure there was at the same time, among a very large number of people, in Wales as in England, a deep feeling—a feeling which went far below the level of their ordinary political animosities—of disapproval of any Measure of the kind, come from whom it might. Therefore, it seemed to him that, in the circumstances, there was something almost gratuitously perverse in the Government introducing so contentious a measure at the present time. Even if the Measure were carried the result must be that, while it might satisfy a certain number of people, it would, at the same time, profoundly dissatisfy and alienate a large part of the public opinion of the country. They had been told that it was ridiculous to assume that the Bill was an attack not only on the Church in Wales, but also on the Church of England. But the very title of the Bill warranted the assumption, and a confirmation of it was to be found in the fact that any speaker, who in course of the Debate had contended that the Measure was only part of a still larger question, was loudly cheered by hon. Members opposite. That was an important fact to bear in mind; it would clear away certain fallacies that some Members seemed to entertain. At the time of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, they were told that that man was a bad friend to the Church of England, who assumed that a precedent would be drawn from that Measure in regard to the Church in this country; but there were some in that House (and he was one of them) who had lived to see those anticipations fulfilled. At any rate, here was a Bill for the Disestablishment of a part of the Church of England; for whatever theories might be advanced about the nationality of Wales, or about the difference between England and Wales, it would be admitted, he believed, by most hon. Members that the Measure was an attack on the Church of England, of which the four Welsh dioceses in question were unquestionably a part. He believed the Bill was not only an unjust attack on the possessions of the Church, but also that it would be fraught with injury to the State by diminishing the influence and prestige of the Church. With regard to the vital question of Disendowment, he sometimes doubted whether hon. Gentlemen opposite fully realised the gravity of the issues involved. They seemed to think the question was merely one of personal emoluments, or of the maintenance of certain individuals. But the Endowments of the Church, of course, meant the making of provision in the different parishes for carrying on its religious services and teaching. That surely was a matter of the greatest moment. If hon. Members thought that the teaching of the Church of England was bad, its doctrines depraved, its ritual superstitious, he could understand their wishing to take away these endowments. But that had not been said, and he would like to express his deep sense of gratitude for the sympathetic way in which the Home Secretary spoke of the work of the Church in Wales. But if the Church was doing a beneficent work in Wales, and if its doctrines were a pure form of Christian religion, why take away the means, which together with other means enabled them to do this work? The Secretary for Scotland had fallen into an error when he talked about the Church of England being a voluntary Church in the large towns. That was a very common delusion. The Church in the large towns was a voluntary Church in the sense that a great number of people had contributed voluntarily towards its ministrations, in addition to what it received for endowments; but when these voluntary contributions had been made, and when the parishes had been consolidated which were carved out of the old existing parishes, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners stepped in and from the common fund endowed these new districts; so that the Church was no longer voluntary in the large towns any more than it was in the country parishes. Beyond the endowments on which a Church to some extent relied, it was receiving every week, and every day more and more of the voluntary gifts of its members. Then hon. Members argued that because the members of the Church were liberal, therefore, the endowments should be taken away from them. Could any reasoning be more ridiculous? The right hon. Member for Denbighshire (Sir G. O. Morgan) had used the word "secularisation." This was indeed an ominous word. Did he really think that the cause of religion was likely to be promoted anywhere by secularising the funds so long devoted to its maintenance. The first schedule of the Bill gave the purposes to which these Church Endowments were to be devoted, and the right hon. Member for Bristol had said he could not conceive how these could be called religious objects. Mr. Ruskin had been quoted as having said that other things than Church purposes might be religious objects; there was a sense in which that might be true, but there was also a sense in which it might be exceedingly fallacious. He would ask hon. Members who were Roman Catholics if they would say that money devoted to religious objects, and to the maintenance of Church teaching, should be given to cottage hospitals, dispensaries, convalescent homes, and so forth. Those things were noble objects in themselves, but to call them religious objects in the sense in which the word was used was a perversion of language. Hon. Gentlemen should at any rate consider the sentiment which was associated with these Endowments. The main objection to this Bill, and to all Bills framed on this footing, was that they were taking from the direct service of religion money intended for that service. It had been said that the great majority of the people of Wales were Nonconformists. But even supposing all the calculations which had been made were correct, he had still as strong an objection to their proposal as ever, because these funds from time immemorial had been dedicated to the highest service of which they were capable, the service of religion. The hon. and learned Member for Leeds had said the Church in Wales had been inefficient and corrupt in the past, and threatened them by applying to them the awful denunciation of the Second Commandment, which says, that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children to the third and fourth generation. He objected to hon. Members assuming to themselves in that way the right to act as if they had providential arrangement of the world. At the present day the Church in Wales was confessedly active, but the argument was that because it was unfaithful to its task and did not make use of great opportunities in the past, now that it was awakening from a long sleep its endowments should be taken from it. That was surely an absurd argument, which might have been more plausible if it had been brought forward 80 or 100 years ago. Now, when the Church was more active and had taken warning by the energy of Nonconformists in former times, when she had aroused herself and was becoming, in the words of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, a living and increasing and growing Church—now was the time chosen for wreaking upon the Church vengeance for a condition of things which had passed away. That was about the most unreasonable and illogical position that could be conceived. Something had been said about the depressing influence of an Established Church, and how it weakened the spiritual sense of religion. By way of answer to that allegation, he could not do better than quote the words of the great German theologian, Dr. Döllinger, in 1885:—

> "For my part I think that any such measure should be firmly resisted. It would be a blow to Christianity, not only in England, but throughout Europe."

This was the testimony, not of an English Churchman, but of a Roman Catholic, a deeply-read and very learned and devout man. And as to the alleged advantages of placing the Church on a level with all other denominations, he would remind the House of the words of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, appointed to his present see on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, who, before his appointment was Bishop of Adelaide, in Australia. These were his words on his return to England:—

> "What do I find? I go out to a land where there is no State Church, where there is no Establishment, and do I find that happy state of things which it was prophesied would exist in England were the 'State Church,' as they called it, to be removed and Disestablishment ensue? What do I find? I find the jealousies between denominations intensified, the rivalries increased, nothing but a perpetual spiritual racing between this sect and that sect. I find that—so far from there being peace and harmony between the Church and other denominations who find themselves unhappily unable to be one with the Church—the differences between them are greater, or seem to be greater, than they are in England, and the possibilities of reunion less than they are at home."

He contrasted the tone in which this Debate had been conducted with the language used in the Principality, and said he could not help fearing that if they could ascertain the grounds on which votes had been given in Wales for the policy of Disestablishment, it would be found that the cause of the Church had been grossly misrepresented. If the controversy was going to be continued in Wales—because everybody knew this year could not see the conclusion of it—he hoped it would be conducted in the tone in which the Debate in this House had hitherto proceeded. He felt bound to take part in the Debate, because he represented a constituency which, more than most others, felt very deeply upon the question. Not only the clergy of the Church of England, among whom he had the honour to reckon many as his constituents, but the educated laity of the Church felt deeply upon it. He believed that the Minister and the Ministry who had raised this great, fundamental and all-searching question would have cause to regret having evoked, not only in Wales, but in England, an amount of opposition based on the deepest motives in human nature, which would bring discredit on their policy, and would not tend to the exaltation of their name amongst the Ministries of England.

*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) regretted as much as the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down that any violent or immoderate language should have been used in conducting this controversy. At the same time he called attention to the fact that the supporters of the cause of Disestablishment in Wales had received great provocation, and if there was any blame to be attached on one side, there was certainly blame to be attached to the other, for they had been attacked for the malignant and profligate character of their assault on the Church. He was a Member of the House when the Irish Church Bill was debated, and really during the last two days it seemed as if he was listening once more to the Debates on the Irish Church, because the arguments had been almost word for word an echo of those delivered in the course of that Debate. If the Debates and Legislation on that subject had decided anything at all, they had decided that tithes were national property, in the sense that, if they were given to the Church at all, they were given to it *quâ* the nation at a time when the Church and the nation were identical. They had also decided that the Church of England was an institution whose *status* and revenues were absolutely under the control of Parliament. The late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge said :—

> "The Established Church is a political institution, established, created, and protected by law, and absolutely dependent upon Parliament."

Was it worth while to fight the battle of 25 years ago over again? But the question was settled long before the Disestablishment of the Irish Church; it was settled at the time of the Reformation. He knew he was skating on somewhat thin ice, but as between the authority of the Prime Minister and that of the Home Secretary; he preferred to take his history from the Prime Minister, and he ventured to differ from the view of the Home Secretary as to the continuity of the Church of England. He found it difficult to believe that the Church of the Normans and Saxons, or that of Thomas à Becket, or even the Church of Cardinal Wolsey, was identically the same Church as that now established by law. If it was the same, it was only so in the sense that the Saxon Witenagemot was the same institution as the modern House of Commons. There was in both cases a certain continuity, but it was a very spasmodic continuity; and the Disestablishment and Disendowment that occurred in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth were the most wholesale that the world ever saw. By what occurred in the first year of Elizabeth an entirely new ecclesiastical condition was produced. The statutes of that year transferred all the revenues of the pre-Reformation Church to the post-Reformation Church.

The right hon. Gentleman was speaking at Ten minutes to Seven o'clock, when by the Rules of the House the Debate stood adjourned.

OUT-DOOR RELIEF (IRELAND) BILL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) moved the Second Reading of this Bill.

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.) asked whether there was any precedent for Section 3.

MR. J. MORLEY said, that the provision giving protection from electoral disability to the recipients of relief had been embodied in three Acts providing extra facilities for the granting of outdoor relief passed in 1880, 1886, and 1890. The provision was thought to be of value, not by politicians only, but by the Boards who were charged with the administration of the relief.

MR. T. H. BOLTON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would undertake to afford some opportunity of discussing the matter when the Bill was in Committee.

Objection was taken to proceeding with the Bill, and the Debate therefore stood adjourned.

Sitting suspended at Five minutes to Seven o'clock.

EVENING SITTING.

The House resumed at Nine of the clock.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.

On the Motion to go into Committee of Supply,

MR. WILLIAM ALLEN (Newcastle-under-Lyme), rose to move :—

> "That, as the principle of gratuitous public service, upon which the representation of this House is at present based, limits the freedom of constituencies in the selection of their Representatives, this House is of opinion that a reasonable allowance should forthwith be granted to all Members of Parliament."

He said that he need hardly apologise for again submitting this subject to the attention of the House. He thought that both those who agreed with the Resolution and those who were opposed to it were limited in its importance, and recognised that if Legislation based upon it were passed through the House, it would have far reaching effects on the representative system. The Resolution was identical in terms to that which he proposed two years ago, which the Government then supported and which was carried by a large majority. Whatever the question might be in the House, it was certainly not a party question outside, for at the Trades' Union Congress, at which the leading working men of both political parties were represented, a resolution in favour of the Payment of Members of Parliament was unanimously passed. Therefore he thought he might fairly claim that the Resolution he proposed had the approval of the working classes of the country to whatever party they belonged. His chief objection to the present voluntary system was that it restricted the choice of the constituencies. Under the present system a man must either be possessed of wealth himself, or must have some rich relations who were willing to keep him in Parliament. A seat in the House was attained at present either by wealth or position, and not by merit, and he thought honourable Gentlemen opposite would agree that brains and wealth did not always go together, and that intellect and position were not always united. What they wanted in the House was to have the ablest men in the country, whether they were rich or poor, and he maintained that it was impossible to attain that until the present voluntary system was done away with. There were a certain number of men willing to strain their resources to pay their election expenses, but they were faced with this difficulty—that, after their expenses had been paid, they would have heavy expenses laid upon them, to meet the charges they would have to pay for six months in London attending to the business of the House. They were not able to do this, and the consequence was that they could not come before the constituencies as candidates. He did not think he was exaggerating when he said that in a very large number of constituencies there were men who had taken an active interest in local affairs, men who had studied all the political and social problems of the day, men who were able to keep up a fair position in their own districts, but who would not be able to meet the extra charges that would be laid upon them if they were returned to this House. The consequence was that the constituencies were not able to elect them, and it was difficult to say how much the nation suffered from the loss of the services of these men. He thought that the case at the present time for the payment of members was even stronger than it was two or three years ago, for undoubtedly there were parties in the state, growing in numbers and power and composed almost entirely of poor men. There was the Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party, and there were the Social Democrats. He did not say he agreed with these parties in the doctrines they preached, but he did say that it was not just or fair to them that they should be debarred from returning a candidate to Parliament if they could get a majority for him, simply because they were poor men. He believed that the wider the constituency from which a member could be chosen, the greater would be the confidence felt by the country in the House; for he could not imagin anything that would lead to greater discontent among every section of the community than that they should feel that they were barred because they did not possess wealth, from having a representative in the House. They wanted the ablest men of all classes, so that questions might be discussed from all standpoints. They wanted the doors wide enough to admit all who had ability and merit, all whom the constituencies had confidence in. They wanted brains and not wealth, ability and not position, and that could never be attained under the present system. Another strong argument in favour of granting an allowance to members was that they would get more local men into the House. They were, he believed, better representatives, as being more in touch with the constituencies. Any constituency of their way of thinking would be only too glad, in all probability, to get one of them for its representative; but the ordinary carpet-bagger, the man who went down to a constituency a few months, or sometimes only a few days before the election, who knew nothing of the people or of the wants of the district, was as a rule a most undesirable member. Then he believed that if legislation such as this resolution called for were passed, it would increase the responsibility of Members. Members would have to come up to the scratch. If they did not their constituencies would dismiss them, for they would feel they were not earning their wages. A suggestion had been made that some Members should be paid and that some should not. That was a suggestion he wished to repudiate on the strongest terms, just as the Chancellor of the Exchequer repudiated it two years ago. The right hon. Gentleman said then—

> "A question has been asked as to whether in this matter there is to be equality of treatment of all. I have no hesitation in saying that that is my opinion. I cannot see how it is possible, with respect to the dignity of the individuals who are disposed to receive a salary, you can make a distinction so invidious in its character and calculated to make their position more difficult in this House."

The Leader of the Opposition, speaking against the Motion of the hon. Member for Wansbeck four years ago, used very nearly the same words, for he said that, in his opinion, if one Member was paid all Members ought to be paid. What would it mean if they paid only a certain section? It would mean that Members would have to make a declaration of poverty before they could receive their salaries, just as paupers had to do when they went before the Guardians to get out-door relief. He did not think that it would add to the dignity and honour of the House to make a distinction between different classes of Members, and he believed that the House would never consent to such a course. The hon. Gentleman, the Member for Exeter, who had given notice of an Amendment, objected to the Resolution on the ground that it would involve the taxpayers in some expenditure. Hon. Members opposite professed to be very careful of the taxpayers' interests in a matter of this kind, but they did not hesitate to vote money for a miserable island like Cyprus, or for a railway in Uganda, or in order that what they called the "glorious British flag" might be run up to float over some dismal swamp inhabited by negroes. For such purposes they were willing to spend millions, but when it was a question of paying the people's representatives, so as to get better men in that House to frame laws for the people, hon. Members opposite said at once that they must protect the taxpayers. They were sometimes told that the payment of Members would lower the standard of dignity in that House. Well, they paid the Secretary of State for India £5,000 a year. Did it lower his dignity? Did any among them think less of the right hon. Gentleman's great speech on the Cotton Duties because he received that salary? Did they think less of the Home Secretary because he received a salary? Did they think the Whips who guarded their doors the less dignified because they received salaries? Surely the work of legislating was as good work and as worthy of payment as the task of sitting at the doors of the House and preventing Members from going away. He believed that the dignity of the House would not suffer, and that its work would be better done. Then it was said that the professional politician would gain admittance to the House. But what was meant by the expression "professional politician?" As he understood the term, a professional politician was one who devoted all his time and energies to the service of his country, and who made a special study of all questions that came before the House. The more of that class of men they had in that House the better, He had high authority for the view which he took, the authority of the right hon. Gentleman who helped the Party opposite to Office in the last Parliament by his support. Speaking on January 29, 1885, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham said:—

> "You pay the Ministers of the Crown, and I cannot understand why Members of Parliament should be the only people to work for nothing. If you paid them it is possible that they would feel a higher responsibility to those who employ them. Well, it is said sometimes, 'Oh, but you will introduce the professional politician into England!' Well, why not? The argument does not appear to me to be conclusive. Doctors, lawyers, manufacturers, working men, all have to learn their trade, and I should like to know why politics is the only business which may be left to amateurs. I should like to know why the great interests of the State should be committed to men who undertake to deal with them as a distraction and as a distinction, and who do not make it the serious business of their lives."

That was the opinion of the Leader of one of the wings of the Unionist Party. Surely hon. Members opposite would pay some deference to it. [Admiral FIELD: "Not a bit on that subject."] The hon. and gallant Member would not have said that a short time ago. It was a sign of the beginning of the breach. It was said that, if Members were paid, unworthy men would get into that House. It was possible that, in some rare instances, men unfitted for the position might get into Parliament, but he had never heard any argument to show that a larger percentage of such men would get into the House under a system of payment than could get in now. It certainly was not flattering to the constituencies to say that a larger percentage would get in when the constituencies would have to contribute to the payment of their Members, and would therefore have greater control over them than under the present system when they gave free and voluntary services. Then it was said that the payment of Members would sap independence. He doubted that greatly. Let them consider the position of a Labour Member, who was supported, as a rule, by a Trade Union in his constituency. Such a Member might give a vote that the Trade Union disapproved of, and his salary might be stopped in consequence, and he might be left in a very difficult and awkward position. Now, if such a Member were paid by the State, his constituency would have time in which to reflect upon his conduct, and very likely they would finally come to the conclusion that the Vote which they disapproved of on first hearing of it was, after all, not as open to adverse criticism as they had supposed it to be. The Member, in such a case, would not be compelled to resign his seat in consequence of the withdrawal of his salary at a moment's notice. He would not be in fear and trembling for his Parliamentary existence, and would, therefore, be a freer agent than he could be under the existing condition of things. There were hon. Members who opposed this Resolution, who would probably at a future time have seats in the House of Lords. On the Liberal side, in the House of Lords, at the present time there were 30 Peers who received salaries amounting in all to £150,000 a year, or £5,000 each. He could not understand how Gentlemen who hoped to go up some day to the other House, and to get a share of the plunder there, could oppose with any consistency the payment of Members in the House of Commons. Now what was the position of the Government in this matter? Were they going to satisfy the advanced men in the constituencies by accepting this Resolution, and were they going to promise to bring in a Bill and to press it forward, or were they going to promise to put the necessary charge upon the Budget? He did not ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to grant payment to Members of this present Parliament, for it might seem invidious to vote salaries to themselves, but he did ask the right hon. Gentleman to make a provision that should come into force at the beginning of the next Parliament for the payment of Members in the House of Commons. They were tired of shilly-shallying in this matter, and they wanted a straightforward answer from the Government. Did they mean business or not? Personally, he would very much prefer that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should make a speech against this Resolution, and lead the Members of the Government into the Lobby against it, than that he should make, in favour of the Resolution, a speech that meant nothing except that the Resolution was to be put aside to be forgotten. They ought to understand clearly what the Government's position was, so that the advanced men in the constituencies might know whether a Liberal Government would give effect to their wishes in this matter or not. The Chancellor of the Exchequer answered last Session a question put on this subject by the hon. Member for the Ince Division, and a great many Members understood his answer to contain a pledge that he would introduce a Bill and press it forward during the present Session, and a great number of people outside that House also understood that answer in the same sense. Was he prepared to fulfil that pledge or not? If not, the Government would give grave dissatisfaction to a large body of their supporters, and, before the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave an answer, he would ask him well to count the cost. In conclusion, he would ask the House to recognise what was recognised in every business, in all professions, and in other branches of the public service, that, whatever the work might be, so long as it was honest and straightforward work, the labourer was worthy of his hire.

*Mr. C. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck), in seconding the motion, congratulated the advocates of the payment of Members upon the development of public opinion both in this House and outside, in support of the principle. In 1870, when Mr. Taylor, then Member for Leicester, brought the question forward, he was only able to find 26 Members willing to support him in the Lobby. In 1888, when he himself had the honour to intoduce the Motion, he was supported by 135 Members in a House of 327; in 1892, by 162 Members in a House of 389; while his hon. Friend, who moved the Resolution two years ago, succeeded in carrying it by a majority of 47 in a House of 505 Members, the Government of the day supporting the Resolution. He maintained that the service rendered by the Members of Parliament were not in the nature of benefactions to the constituency, but were public duties, undertaken by responsible representatives, and in the interests and for the well-being of the general community. In that light he claimed that they ought to be paid for as other public duties of a like nature were paid for in nearly every other legislative assembly throughout the world, So far back as 1868, the late Prime Minister said—

> "It would be worse than ridiculous to admit all classes to the franchise, and yet to continue arrangements which practically limit the choice of candidates."

That was the effect of the present system. The present system limited and restricted the choice of constituencies in the selection of their candidates, the choice being practically confined to one class of society —namely, the wealthy and leasured class. It might be contended that if Parliament adopted this principle, it could not stop at Members of Parliament but would have to pay Members of Town Councils and County Councils. Every question of this kind must be determined on its own merits, and where public duties involved the giving up of time ordinarily devoted to business pursuits, then the public must be prepared to compensate such men. At the present time, however, the duties of Town Councils, and even of County Councils, did not involve the same loss of time or attention to business which Membership of this House did, and in every case he believed where loss of time and money out of pocket were incurred by Members of Town Councils or County Councils the community undertook to indemnify them. The principle had already been recognised by Parliament itself. If a public Bill came before a Select Committee or Royal Commission, and, say, the Mayor of Newcastle or the Lord

Provost of Glasgow were requested to give evidence, they were indemnified for money out of pocket, and were also compensated for loss of time on a scale in proportion to their social position. Why in words used by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, should a Member of Parliament, who devoted the whole of his time to public duties, be the only man who was not to be indemnified for his loss of time? Hon. Members might serve day in and day out on Committees and Commissions, but unless they were compelled to come from their homes to attend these meetings, unless they actually incurred expenses, they were not entitled to claim any indemnification for their loss of time or their devotion to public business. Parliament had gone further, and had recognised the principle by providing pensions for ex Cabinet Ministers. These pensions were granted simply on the ground that the men who received them had been so completely drawn off the ordinary economic and industrial lines, that they were no longer able to keep up a position in society becoming an ex Minister. The position was an anomalous one. These Gentlemen might have been for many years in high paid offices under the Crown, and yet, the moment they passed into opposition they were entitled to a pension, though they then only acted in the capacity of private Members. On what ground these hon. Gentlemen were entitled to payment for their services while it was denied to private Members he was at a loss to understand. It was, in his opinion, ridiculous to say that the payment of Members would degrade the House of Commons. The Hon. James Munro, a member of the Victorian Parliament, speaking at a banquet in Liverpool four years ago said, that the result of paying each Member of that Parliament £300 a year had been exceedingly satisfactory; they had an honest Parliament, and a Parliament greatly in accord with the wishes of the people, who were well served by it. He failed to see why payment of Members should degrade private Members any more than it was held to degrade official Members. The old Tory notion was that the payment of Members would improve the dignity of the House, and, therefore, Lord Blandford, in introducing his Reform Bill in 1830, said, as the object of the Bill was to restore the representation to its ancient purity, he proposed to restore the principle and practice of paying Members the wages of attendance. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might say, as the Prime Minister said to a deputation that waited upon him a short time ago, that the real difficulty was one of time and money. He understood that it was the intention of the Government this Session to deal with the question of registration and the payment of returning officers' fees. Why should they not deal with this question in the same Bill. He agreed that it would be impolitic to put the principle into practice in this Parliament. The country ought to have an opportunity of giving its decision at the next election, with the full knowledge that this principle was in force. The constituencies would then know that the Members they returned would be paid for their services. As to the cost, he did not think that the nation, considering the enormous duties that were cast upon Members at the present time would grudge them a reasonable indemnity for their loss of time. And, after all, the cost, in his judgment, would not be more than the cost of a first-class battleship, and the House could always find money for that. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer was so minded, there was not the least doubt that, with his wonderful powers of resource, he would find the means necessary to give effect to this principle. Concluding, he said there was no question, in the opinion of the industrial classes, of greater importance than the question of payment of Members. It would have the effect of removing every restriction on their liberty of choice and enabling them to select from their own ranks tried and trusted representatives, who, in his judgment, would be an ornament and a credit both to the constituencies which they represented and to the House of Commons itself.

* SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE (Exeter) said, remarks had been made both by the Mover and the Seconder of the Resolution which relieved Members on his side of the House from the necessity of opposing it, for both of them practically said they wished to omit the word "forthwith" from the Resolution, and merely to call upon the Government to take action in a future Parliament. He,

for one, would await with perfect confidence the verdict of the country on this question if the issue were fairly and squarely presented to the electors; but he would like to state his objections to the proposal, and he could assure the hon. Member that the question of the cost was by no means the only or even the principle objection to it. He would first take broad objection that it was not for this country and the mother of Parliaments to be bound by precedents, or by examples set by other States. It was rather for us to set precedents, and for other countries to follow our example. He would also ask those hon. Members who might be disposed to rely on foreign example, whether they were prepared to follow that conclusion to its logical result, and, for instance, to reverse the whole of our commercial policy and adopt that system of protection which prevailed, not only abroad, but in our own Colonies? He thought the House should consider the very great distinction which existed between the British Parliament and that of foreign or Colonial Legislatures. In Germany, Austria and Italy it must be remembered that Parliament was not supreme, but was largely checked and controlled by the Crown, which in those countries had a very real power. Again, in Switzerland the Referendum supplied the electorate with a very practical check over the Members of the Swiss Parliament. In the United States, under certain circumstances, it was within the competency of the Supreme Court to declare the action of the Congress contrary to the Constitution, and therefore null and void. Consequently, it appeared to him that the action of the Continental and foreign Legislatures was of a good deal less importance than was the action of this Parliament, which was, after all, the supreme authority in this country. Of course the position of the French Assembly was more analogous to that of our Parliament. Although he would be unwilling to say an offensive word against that body, he did not think that any student of history would wish to change the position of the French Legislature for that of the British Parliament at any stage of our constitutional history. Passing to Colonial Legislatures, he would first remind the House of one distinctive characteristic, namely, that whereas in this country there was a leisured class able and willing to enter Parliament, that state of things did not prevail in our colonies, which were obliged to pay their Members, because they were not fortunate enough to possess a class of men able to give their services gratis. Whether it was or was not desirable that the House of Commons should consist mainly of such men was a matter for disussion; but, if it were, it was worth noting, as a matter of fact, that we possessed that class and that our colonies did not. He would further remind the House of the very great distinction which existed between differences of opinion entertained in the House of Commons and the differences of opinion which divided the members in our Colonial Legislatures. In the House of Commons hon. Members taxed one another with their differences of opinion on such matters as Home Rule, Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, and so on, and they had hitherto been spared that class of questions which prevailed so largely in some of our colonies, in America, in France, and in Italy, namely, those questions of personal corruption which were mainly the basis of the disputes which took place in those Legislatures, where there was nothing more common than accusations of corruption against Ministers or against private Members, charging them with having sold their votes for a direct pecuniary bribe. That was a state of things which he hoped that the House of Commons would always escape; but it was impossible to disguise not only that those charges were freely bandied about in Colonial Legislatures, but that those Legislatures were composed mainly of men of the same race as ourselves. He did think that if the House of Commons were to adopt a system which might lead men to enter the House for the purpose of making a living by it, those unfortunate charges might, not impossibly, be raised against Members of the House of Commons. He was not going to suggest that there was a different standard of morality between men who were rich and men who were poor, but just as there were certain temptations which were presented with considerable force to the rich, but from which poor men were saved by the very fact of their poverty, there were, at the same time, temptations from which the rich were free from the very fact of their wealth, but to which poor men were particularly exposed. In regard to so-called labour Members, he entered a decided protest against the idea that they monopolised in that House the representation of the working classes. All the Members of the House were returned more or less by the votes of the working classes. It was said that it was quite impossible for working men to bear the expenses incidental to a seat in Parliament. He would like to remind the House that the 12 or 14 labour Members in the House were returned by majorities averaging about 5,000 votes per representative, and if that number of electors were determined to have one particular man to represent them it was idle to say that, providing of a small sum for that man's maintenance while in Parliament rendered his candidature an impossibility. Since the legislation of 1867 and 1884 the working classes were absolute masters and controllers of the political situation. If they chose to return to Parliament men not specially connected with themselves, the reasonable explanation was to be found in the fact that they knew themselves to be masters of the situation, and that they possessed the means, by a cheap Press, by public meetings, deputations to Ministers, and constant contact with their representatives, of impressing upon the latter what policy they wish them to adopt; and therefore they did not think it necessary to turn for their representatives to working men, who, from their position, had not had the opportunities of education and study such as most of the Members in the House at present possessed. They must also bear in mind that the representatives of working class constituencies were backed by great Trades Unions and powerful and wealthy societies who could find any amount of money for the promotion of the interests of Labour, and who could easily find sufficient means to supplement the contribution of a poor constituency. He would say that hon. Gentlemen, like the hon. Gentlemen opposite, when they addressed the House on any Labour Question, or on any public question indeed, spoke with special authority for the constituents or the Trades Unions, who made sacrifices in order to secure their presence in that House. But, if they were all placed on the same dead level of £300, they would lose that special esteem and authority. Now, he wanted to take one rather broader objection. He heard, with great regret, an expression which fell from the mover of the Resolution, when he spoke of Members of the House earning their wages, because, if, that principle were adopted, it would be a long step towards placing Members of the House in the position of being an assembly of paid delegates simply carrying out what it was the fashion to call the mandate of their constituencies. If the hon. Member chose merely to carry out the mandate of his constituents, he was at perfect liberty to do so, but for himself he repudiated that idea. He was not sent there as a delegate of any constituency, or to carry out their mandate. It was the duty of a Member to listen with attention and respect to the views of his constituents, but it was no less his duty to tell his constituents what his views were, and if they were not the views of the majority he should rather resign his seat then abandon his convictions. He could not see how they were to have salaries for themselves and refuse to vote them to Members of Parish and District Councils and other public bodies. He hoped, almost against hope, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might recur to his wiser frame of mind which he held in 1871. If that was too much to expect he appealed to unofficial Members to enter the Lobby and enter a protest against the Motion. He regretted, more deeply than he could say, that there should be any doubt as to what the verdict of the majority might be, but he hoped they would show that public spirit was not wholly extinct, and that they were prepared to act like the great statesman early in the century who —

> "Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,
> And served his Albion for hisself."

*Mr. R B. HALDANE (Haddington): said, similar Motions to this had been carried in previous sessions, and then how was it that it had not been carried into practice? They could not forget that the principle was embodied in the Programme of the Liberal Party, and yet they seemed not much nearer the attainment of their object. If there had been slowness in carrying the principle into effect, he believed it was because there were many on his side of the House, as well as on the other, who were not educated up to the proper level of this question. One remark was made by the Mover of the Resolution with which he did not agree. It was said that this was not a Party Question. But it was a Party Question, and a difficult one for the Liberal Party, and like other questions, they would only turn it into victory, after a long and sustained effort. They had nothing to do with the analogies of the United States and France; they were simply concerned with the three Kingdoms. The hon. Baronet seemed to think that it was sufficient if they had a leisured class who could discharge the duties. Was that a doctrine which hon. Members expected the House to assent to as an argument put forward in 1893? It had been negatived, as he had hoped, once and for ever in 1832. Doctrines of that kind were out of date, and the House was face to face with a state of things in which matters had changed. They had accepted the principle of democracy rightly or wrongly, and they were face to face with the fact that they relied on the people and on popular votes for the purpose of determining the footing on which the business of the country was to be conducted. If that was so, how, then, did hon. Members stand to-day with reference to this matter? The hon. Member was filled with fears about the effect of making it possible for a large number of persons to whom, in practice, it was not possible to come and take their part as legislators in the House of Commons. It was rather interesting to look at the effect of the fears on the sections of which the House was composed. He did not think that the Conservative party need be afraid of the democrat and the wirepuller being introduced into their midst; they need have no fear of the influx of the working man, degraded by the acceptance of a salary. The Conservative working man representative was an imported remedy, intended only to be consumed in homœopathic doses. He was not aware that it was such an easy thing in constituencies possessing majorities such as those of hon. Gentlemen opposite for men with £300 or £400 a year to obtain acceptance in order to be returned to power. He passed from the Conservative working man to the case of the labour party. He should have thought that on the morrow of the Bristol election the Conservative party would not show any feeling of unfriendliness to what was called the Labour Party. He was not sure that the House would not see a closer alliance between the Conservative Party and those who maintained an independent attitude towards the old-fashioned party of progress. Surely it was not right that, from the point of view of that party which was coming more and more to the front, which was performing its work, which had got its mandate, whatever might be its future, it was not to be denied that the time had come when, if, it be possible, the conditions should be removed which restricted its activity and hampered its efforts. Take the case of the Irish party. Was there an instance in the history of representation in this country of a set of men who had struggled under greater difficulties in face of poverty, in the face of extraordinary hindrances arising from distance, from social conditions, which had made it difficult to send a compact body of representatives to this Parliament to embody the sentiments of their people? If they passed to the constituencies which hon. Members on the Liberal side of the House represented, the case seemed to him to be stronger. Did hon. Members opposite really think that the Liberal Associations would be likely to fall into the hands of wirepullers and demagogues? Did they know how fastidious, how jealous, those who made up these bodies were, of the character of the men who represented them? Did they realise that in the case of the men who were unworthy to come to the House of Commons to represent those constituencies, it was too often because, owing to the difficulties of their position, it was impossible for these constituencies to find men who would come forward to bear the heat and the burden of representing them? Hon. Members opposite had a larger proportion of rich men in their ranks than was the case with the Liberal supporters of the Government. The Conservatives had no difficulty in finding a candidate, but with the Liberals it was constantly necessary to go outside the locality, to bring in people who, after all, even then, only came in circumstances of constraint, and in the face of adverse conditions, to represent the people, and who were with difficulty obtained even for that purpose. Surely, from that point of view, it was right that they should enlarge the choice of the constituencies and give them the opportunity to pick and choose more freely, trusting them to repudiate and put aside any man who had not a spotless and blameless character, to carry out the trust committed to him. The hon. Baronet spoke of corruption. Where did they find the best instances of corruption in that House? Was it from the poor men, or was it from the company-monger? Was it from the wealthy capitalist—he cared not on which side of the House he sat? He grieved to think that there had been some cases of this kind on his own side of the House, as he also grieved to think that there had been cases among hon. Gentlemen opposite. It was one of the saddest things to think that the constituencies had been driven to look for representatives in men who did not come forward with clean hands financially, but who came into Parliament, not for the purpose of politics, but for their own gain, for their own ends, and who found themselves in a better position to follow their avocations with the letters "M.P." after their names. He did not think they could therefore say that the working class, was the corrupt class. Whatever might be said against the representatives of a body like the County Council, which was democratic, which had a large number of men on it who earned a scanty livelihood, they had, at all events, in that body, whatever its faults, one of the most remarkable examples of purity, absolute individual incorruptibility. He knew of no case to the contrary. It appeared to him, therefore, that the position in which the House was now placed was the outcome, not of anything which had happened to-day, not of any corruption which might be traced to yesterday, but the outcome of the principle which they took up in 1832, which they carried further in 1867, and a stage further still in 1885. It seemed to him that when they said they would trust the people of the country to manage their own affairs, not asserting that they were absolutely infallible, not asserting that the were better or wiser than any other class of the community, but simply right and earnest in the doctrine of representative Government, then they had reached a standard from which the proposition of the evening was the inevitable and logical outcome. He did not say the payment of Members would come at once; the constituencies had to be educated up to it; but it was coming very rapidly. Each year, as the people came more and more to understand what it was, it impressed itself on their minds, not only as a thing they must take for what it was worth, but as one which would work out to their best advantage, inasmuch as it would give them a larger choice of candidates and a better opportunity of supervising those candidates. He did not wonder that it had taken time since the proposition was first mooted to attain to its present position; but the question was progressing, and the two sides of the House were coming to a better understanding about it. Yet he believed it would remain a Party question. It was one of those Party questions that would be carried, on a day not far off, by a decisive majority, and then it would be seen to be something beneficial and in the interests of the whole community, just as the principle of representative government had been seen to be an almost unmixed blessing.

*MR. C. J. DARLING (Deptford) said, he could not help wondering whether, when the hon. and learned Member said that this was to be a Party question as between the two sides of the House, he had read the speech of the right hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) in 1870, in which he advanced that very argument of the existence of a leisured class, upon which the Mover and Seconder of this Resolution appeared to throw scorn, and which the last speaker had tried utterly to demolish. In 1870 the right hon. Gentleman said:—

> "But the truth is this—and let us not disguise it from ourselves—the condition of this country is peculiar. We have in this country a vast leisure class to which there is nothing parallel on the face of the earth. There is no country in which such an amount of wealth is concentrated within so small a space, and where, with respect to occupation, wealth being abundant in the market—if I may use a metaphor of

> political economy—commands but a small price. We have wealthy men in the country to whom wealth is nothing because it is so common; but power, honour, distinction, the confidence of their countrymen, the favour of the Crown—all these things have value in their eyes; they are not money, but they are money's worth, and the public has no difficulty whatever in finding competent and qualified persons—the most competent generally and the best qualified persons—to discharge all these offices without pay."

There was no good case in argument for the payment of Members, and because this was so, hon. Members opposite said, "Let us make a Party question of it." According to the Resolution, payment would have to be made to Members of the Government in addition to their official salaries; for the Resolution said the allowance was to be "granted to all Members of Parliament."

MR. W. ALLEN: They have a reasonable allowance already.

*MR. DARLING said, the Resolution did not make any exception. The hon. and learned Gentleman said:-

> "Do not let us hear any more the argument about the leisured class; it was the argument used in 1832."

Yes; but it was the argument of the right hon. Gentleman in 1870; had he since given it up? ["Yes."] In 1886, he supposed. The hon. and learned Gentleman told them they must assimilate this House to the London County Council, because in this House there had been unfortunate lapses in financial matters, and in the London County Council there had been none. Did he know that three members of the London County Council had been sent to gaol for dishonesty—one for stealing a railway ticket, one for stealing a shilling from a lady of easy virtue, and the third for some other unconsidered trifle; that other two members were principal shareholders in a newspaper to which the Council had deliberately, by their own vote, sent the bulk of their advertisements, and that their conduct had been arraigned before that body itself as corrupt conduct. Yet it was said that this House, on account of those unfortunate spots which they all regretted—none more than Her Majesty's Ministers must be made pure, clean, and wholesome like unto the London County Council. If there were an argument wanting against the Motion, the hon. and learned Member had supplied it: it was, that this would make the House of Commons like the London County Council.

MR. J H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs): Are the members of the London County Council paid?

*MR. DARLING said, some of them were paid directly, and he rather gathered that others took means of paying themselves. It was suggested, too, they should resemble the Deputies of France and Italy. Could there be a more preposterous proposition? The case of America had long been given up. If it had not been demolished before, it had been demolished by the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Burns), who had investigated the purity of American public life on the spot, and had given it as his deliberate opinion, first of all, that he knew only one place to equal Chicago, and then on further thought, that that particular place did not come up to Chicago in iniquity. They were told that this was particularly a labour question, and that in view of the election the other day at Bristol, they must make the House more in accord with trades-unionism and the advancing tide of democracy. How were they to set about it? The hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division said the Trades Union Congress had passed a resolution in favour of the Motion, and he added that this was not a Party question, but a trades union question.

*MR. FENWICK begged the hon. and learned Member's pardon. He never said anything of the kind; he said the representative men amongst the trade unionists were in favour of this proposal, but he never said it was their question.

*MR. DARLING understood the gentlemen in question had expressed the opinion as officials of the trades unions, and as delegates to the Trades Union Congress, and he thought the hon. Member said it was at the Congress they had expressed their opinion in favour of this Motion. He apologised if he fell into the error—a very natural one—that having been discussed and resolved upon at the Trades Union Congress, it was not inaccurately described as a trades union question. If it be a trades union question, was it a question of the old or new unionism? Was a Member of Parliament to receive a minimum wage, or what? Was overtime to be permitted? The Resolution did not say. In the times when the proposed system prevailed in this country there were two scales of payment; there was the scale of 2s. a day for borough Members and there was the scale of twice that amount for Knights, and he was obliged to confess that the impartial services rendered by one or two Knights to both Parties really entitled them to draw from both sides of the House their 2s. a day. He imagined the Congress would not be in favour of Members of Parliament doing an excessive amount of work for their pay. He imagined they would be opposed to Evening Sittings and Winter Sessions, or if they did consent to such things they would insist upon a wholly different set of labourers being employed for such overtime. He could not imagine that the Trades Union Congress would consent to impose upon the Members of the House of Commons any obligations they would not allow the members of their own bodies to undertake. They must have two shifts of Members, or the one shift must be paid for overtime. He did not know how the point was going to be solved, but they must certainly have such a question raised by those who had come here with a mandate from the Trades Union Congress. Just as it would be possible to pay some Members more than others. They would be brought face to face with the question whether a Knight of the Shire or a Metropolitan Member should receive more than anybody else, or whether a man should be rewarded by the public according to the amount of work he did, or whether they should all draw the same salary. It would be obviously unjust that his hon. Friend the Member for King's Lynn (Mr. Gibson Bowles), for instance, should only received what everybody else got. Before this proposal could commend itself to the House he fancied it must be a little more carefully thought out. There was only one other argument to which he wished to allude. It had been said there was something degrading if a man who was not in a position without some payment from the public funds to support the dignity of a Member of Parliament—whatever that might be—had to make a declaration to that effect. It had been said by another hon. Member there was no degradation in Members of Parliament being paid, because those in office were paid, and those who ceased to hold office received a pension as a matter of course. That was not so. As he understood it, ex-Ministers who received pensions—there were only four ex-Ministers in receipt of pensions at the present time—had to make what was called the declaration of poverty. There was no disgrace. If there was no degradation in an ex-Minister of the Crown making a declaration that he was in need of a pension, why should an ordinary Member of Parliament or a working man be degraded by making it. Before they passed this Resolution to pay those who wanted salaries and those who did not, they should exhaust every other remedy, because this Resolution meant putting a further taxation on the taxpayers of the Country, directly and deliberately for their own advantage. It was useless to say:—

> "Get rid of the obloquy of doing that by voting that we shall not have it, but that the next Parliament shall."

The next Parliament would consist, for the most part, of men who would not want it. They ought to see whether a smaller remedy than that proposed would not meet the case.

*MR. J. W. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire) admitted that weight was to be attached to many of the arguments used in opposition to the Motion. Although the difference of opinion in the House was great, he believed that, after all, was possible to assign neutral ground on which the opponents and promoters of the measure might meet. The question seemed to him largely to depend on what the salary to be received should be. If they could fix a salary that would admit working men to Parliament, and at the same time offer no inducement to any man to come there for the sake of getting it, it seemed to him that they would have solved the problem. The working man who would be likely to seek election would probably be making £2 or £3 a week. He would not fix the salary at more than this except to allow something for the extra cost of living in London, and railway fares to and from his constituency. £150 or £200 a year, with railway expenses, would probably meet the case. If working men wished to enter Parliament they should be prepared to make sacrifices, just as Members who were already there had made sacrifices to obtain their positions. It had been said that if a Member of Parliament were given a salary he would be more liable to accept bribes than a man who received no salary. That was a startling proposition, and one which required proof. He agreed that a poor man was exposed to temptations to which a rich man was not, and for that very reason advocated salaries. It had been said that payment of Members would lead to corruption. The London County Council had been alluded to. The Members of the Council received no salaries. But the hon. and leanred Gentleman said they had no salaries but they found means of paying themselves. He thought it was an unfair aspersion, but, granting it was true, it was an argument for payment of salaries. If men without salaries found a means of paying themselves, the sooner it was arranged to pay them a salary above board, the better it would be. The hon. Baronet opposite said, that this country should set the precedent and not borrow an example from foreign countries. But this country had set the precedent. Six hundred years ago this country first adopted the system of payment of Members, and the whole history of this question was fraught with most important lessons on the subject they were now discussing. In the first place, the payment of Members was adopted for the very reason for which it was demanded now, viz., that they could not get Members of Parliament of the class to stand without paying them, and a salary was granted. These salaries were, unfortunately, ultimately paid by the constituencies, and had it not been for that fact, he believed they would have continued to be paid down to the present time. The law creating the system of payment of Members had never been repealed, and in the opinion of many eminent legal authorities, there were many Members of this House who, if they claimed wages under the conditions laid down in these old Acts, would be entitled to the payment of them. The system died out because, unfortunately, Members found other means of paying themselves. It was found by their constituents that they could made such handsome sums in the pickings to which they were entitled, that, instead of having to pay a Member for his services, it was easy to get a Member to pay them to adopt him. That was a remarkable fact, and it meant that the moment corruption entered by the door of this House, payment of Members went out by the window. So far from leading to corruption, the two were utterly incompatible. The old system of paying Members was not introduced. It was not necessary, because, long after corruption of the grossest sort had passed away, Members of Parliament had a great many privileges which, in themselves, amounted to a handsome salary, such, for instance, as immunity from their creditors for themselves and their friends, and the privilege of franking letters, which Sir Reginald Palgrave

Mr. J. W. Crombie.

estimated was worth £900 a year These had been done away with, but there had been other privileges, even less highly to be recommended, which also constituted a money value in the letters "M. P." after one's name. It had been, unfortunately, too easy when a man had these letters to obtain directorships. He was happy to say, however, that that was dying out, and, at the present moment, the House of Commons was purer and freer from corruption and from ulterior financial motives than at any period of its history. It was actually in consequence of this purity that they demanded the payment of Members, and if such a demand were granted, he felt certain that that purity would be by no means and in no way endangered.

*MR. GEORGE CURZON (Lancashire, Southport) observed that when a motion, the terms of which were identical with this, was introduced and passed by the House by a majority of 47 two years ago, the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them that he would carry it out as soon as he had time and money at his disposal. Since that date the Chancellor of the Exchequer had had a larger allowance of time than at that period he had reason to expect, or that they thought he had a right to expect; and, as regarded money, in the interim his financial genius, which they all acknowledged, had placed very considerable resources at his disposal. And yet, up to the present time, they had heard nothing whatever about the fulfilment of those pledges then given, and for his own part he could not forbear from sharing the suspicions which were honestly entertained and, a it appeared to him, most candidly expressed, by the Member for Haddington and the Mover of the Motion. The former of these hon. Gentlemen, in his able and ingenious speech, said they were not much nearer the point of fruition than they were two years ago, and that remark he thought not only true in fact, but probably prophetic in tone, and if, half an hour hence, the hon. Member had been able to make his speech after the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would very likely say the same thing. The fact was that the proposal for the Payment of Members was one of those proposals which it was easy enough to commend with a sort of clap-trap plausibility on popular platforms in the country; easy enough, too, to vote for with the cynical impunity that characterised their proceedings on a Friday night in the House of Commons. But when it came to the question of a responsible Government carrying the Resolution into effect he did not believe either the present Government or the Government which might succeed them would in the least degree meet the desires of hon. Members below the Gangway opposite. He remembered reading an admirable speech against the payment of Members by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer over 20 years ago. He should not give himself the luxury of quoting that speech, because he had done so on previous occasions, but having heard the speech the right hon. Gentleman made two years ago on the question, and which the Mover of the Resolution implored him not to repeat that night, he could not help thinking that the sympathies of the right hon. Gentleman were now in reality at bottom in agreement with that former speech, delivered in times when the right hon. Gentleman was not his present but his former self. In this discussion on the Payment of Members it was almost impossible to say anything new. He hoped he should not be regarded as saying anything disrespectful of those on the other side who had preceded him when he stated that there was absolutely no novelty in their arguments, and, equally for himself, he might say that he did not in the least expect that he should be able to introduce any novelty in his brief reply. Now, his hon. Friend the Member for Haddington used an argument which was characteristic of his subtle mind. He said that payment of Members was the logical corollary of the various constitutional steps, particularly those of political enfranchisement, that Parliament had taken during the past 20 years. That was an interesting theoretical assumption on the part of the hon. Member, but he did not make—and it was doubtful whether, with all his ingenuity, he could make—any attempt to demonstrate it in fact. In his opinion a logical corollary was, in modern political phraseology, merely a synonym for the lowest political expediency. The Payment of Members was no more the logical corollary of the Franchise Bills that had been passed, than would be Manhood Suffrage, Female Suffrage, One Man One Vote, or any other of the particular methods of tinkering the Constitution that were in favour with hon. Members opposite. Since he had been in the House he had heard almost every new proposal stated to be the logical corollary of something that preceded it at some time or other, and he had no doubt that if this proposal was carried into law they would have the question of Payment of Members quoted at some future time as the logical antecedent of some measure of which at the present moment they had not the remotest idea. Then, as to the argument of the hon. Member who moved the Resolution, why should they pay a Secretary of State, a Member of that House, £5,000 a year, and not pay the ordinary Member of Parliament; he conceived the answer would be that they paid these right hon. Gentlemen high salaries because they were worth the price. In the course of the discussion the sum of £350 a year had been mentioned as a possible salary for hon. Members, but for his own part he was free to confess, without making any discrimination between Members on either side of the House, that he thought some hon. Members would be dear at the price. They paid these right hon. Gentlemen because, he presumed, they could not obtain their services without paying them a very substantial salary, and, moreover they gave them these large salaries as an equivalent—and, in his opinion, a most modest equivalent, but still such as was customary in this country—for the permanent engagement of abilities of high order in the service of the State. The argument, therefore, that because we paid a Secretary of State £5,000 a year we ought to pay every ordinary Member £350 a year, was as absurd as to pretend that, because the Deputy Chairman of the County Council was paid £1,500 a year, therefore every member of that body ought also to receive a salary. He passed to another argument, and a very familiar one. The hon. Member who moved the Resolution asked the House to affirm the principle that the labourer was worthy of his hire. But if the labourer did not want any hire, and if any considerable proportion of the body of labourers under discussion not only did not want their hire, but would decline it if it were offered them, why should it be forced upon them? There was another consideration—were the Members of the House of Commons the only labourers who ought to be spoken of in this context? The hon. Baronet pointed out what was a perfect truism, that in this country we had a great administrative system, at any rate as regards local government, the principle of which was that of unpaid public service, which permeated every class of our organisation and our population, the basis of which was to be found among the people and the apex of which was perhaps supplied by that House. If they were to pay Members of Parliament in the manner proposed, it was perfectly certain that all this great machinery that had been so recently set up, their County, District, Parish, and Town Councils would equally be entitled to and would equally claim remuneration. They would find it impossible any longer to sustain that great system of unpaid magisterial service, which was one of the chief peculiarities and distinctions of this country, and, descending to another grade of the public service—than whom he ventured to say none were more meritorious—the jurors who constituted our ordinary and special juries would also claim, and with a persistency they could not resist, payment for their services. So then, if they made this concession to Members of Parliament, they would be starting upon a downward plane, they could not possibly arrest their progress until they reached the bottom, and they would not be able to stop until the total charge put upon the revenues amounted to between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000. Passing to what he would call the main argument—namely, that under the present system the choice of the constituencies was unhappily limited—he might say that there was not a man on that side of the House who had the slightest desire to impose any restriction whatsoever upon the legitimate choice of candidates by constituencies. There was nobody on those Benches who would argue that the House ought to be composed solely of the rich, leisurely, or well-to-do. They were in favour, as much as hon. Gentlemen opposite, of throwing wide open the doors of the House and admitting everyone whom a constituency succeeded in electing. The Mover of the Resolution drew a picture from which it might be inferred that each constituency was flooded with a number of admirable gentlemen whom it was desirous of returning and who desired to be returned, but who were prevented from their condition of destitution from entering the portals of the House. For his own part, he belonged to that class which had been called by an hon. Member "carpet-baggers," but he could only say he had never come across the class of gentlemen depicted by the hon. Member in his own constituency. In electing him his constituency not only did what he thought a wise thing, but they also, of their own initiative preferred him, an outside stranger, with reasonable means at his disposal, to a crowd of presumably better qualified candidates who existed in their midst. If the Motion were passed the result would not be that a larger number of working men and poor men would get into the House. That was not the experience of foreign countries, nor of the colonies; but in a number of constituencies they would have needy, impecunious adventurers attracted by the distinction attaching to the House, and still more by the salary. If it were not a desideratum that the House should consist of rich men, it was equally undesirable to have in their midst a number of poor men who were attracted by the prospect of a stipend, and who might be a serious political danger. There were even stronger reasons against the proposal: if Payment of Members were established they must be prepared to revolutionize our political machinery. At present, political principles and views were crystallized within very definite limits, and political parties were divided by unmistakable lines. The result was that at an election now the electors had to choose ordinarily between two candidates, advocating two different policies, in deciding to whom they should give their suffrages. Already there were indications that another system was growing up; but if there were payment of Members there would be in every constituency such a rush of candidates, mainly drawn from the Liberal Party, and therefore a great source of political advantage to the Conservatives that they must inevitably institute the second ballot, and, indeed, in some cases a third ballot might be required. [*Ministerial Cheers.*] He was surprised to find that there were some Members to cheer that prospect. It had always seemed to him to be one of the glories of our public life that we were free from that confusion of political issues which was such a fruitful source of trouble and danger to many countries on the Continent. He hoped the House would willingly accept the proposition that anything which tended to aggravate the control that was exercised by the constituency over the Member of Parliament was to be deprecated. They all knew from experience how invidious and how extreme that pressure could sometimes be. It was perfectly true that a man was honoured by being returned to Parliament. In return for that honour he gave his services for nothing, and he was allowed a very reasonable and most necessary measure of personal liberty. But if they gave Members of Parliament a salary of £350 a year it was certain that many of the constituencies would insist on ear-marking for their own local purposes the greater part of that salary. The poor man, therefore, under this proposed change would be no better off than he was now. But, more than that, when a man knew that by taking a line in antagonism to a large section or to a majority of his constituency he might lose not merely his seat, but his salary, if a poor man he could be placed in a position which he would find, in some cases at least, considerable difficulty in resisting. But the strongest argument of all was the effect which the change would have upon the position of the House of Commons in the estimation of the country. It ought to be an object dearer to every Member than the retention of his seat in that Chamber to secure the hold of the House on the confidence and esteem of the country at large. In the various political struggles which they had waged, whatever might have been their aberrations of judgement and conduct, the House of Commons, on the whole, had retained a hold on the respect of the people. Prejudiced as Members of the House sometimes might be, ignorant as they often were, the people yet believed they were honest, and they knew, in modern times at least, that they were pure. But if he read the signs of the times aright, he did not think that this position of the House of Commons in public estimation had been maintained, and he doubted whether the House of Commons, as an institution, had now a very large reserve fund of popularity at its back upon which it might draw unlimited cheques in the future. Too often when classes in this country appealed to the House to consider their grievances and to look into their concerns, they found the House engaged in petty Party recriminations which they could not understand. And too often, also, when the citizens of our great Empire outside came to the doors the House and asked for even the most modest attention to their concerns, a deaf ear was turned to their claims. At the same time that they had this growing suspicion and distrust of the House of Commons on the part of the people, they also found existing the keenest and most acute distrust and suspicion of anything like financial reward in public life. The most vigilant and searching criticism was applied to anything like political pensions. If his diagnosis were correct, he could understand that it might be said with some justice in the future upon critical occasions, when a Vote of Confidence was being decided and the fate of a Government was at stake, that the independence of hon. Members was compromised by the fact that their salary depended on the vote which they gave. He would not press that too strongly, but Payment of Members would in the last resort decrease the respect in which the House was held and lower the status of its Members. Finally, there was the plea that this was a democratic measure, or, in other words, that it was a measure acceptable to the people. If so, why not apply the only possible and reasonable test, and propose that the people in the various localities should pay for it themselves? Then it could be seen how popular the measure was. It was easy enough to put a charge of £250,000 a year on the Consolidated Fund; the constituencies did not feel that. But let the people be asked whether they, as ratepayers, would be willing to bear the burden. This was not a piece of democratic legislation at all. Deserving and praiseworthy as the class might be for whom the change was made, it remained true that this was a piece of class legislation and nothing else. But it was not on this ground that he opposed it. Because he believed that it would dislocate our whole political machinery and bring no compensation, and because it would lower the status of the House, he hoped it would be long before this Resolution, however often hon. Members might vote for it on Friday nights, was taken up by any responsible Government and embodied in an Act of Parliament.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): The hon. Member criticised me for having, as he said, held a different opinion 20 years ago upon this subject from that which I hold now. That is perfectly true. The hon. Member is one whom the House justly admires, and in whose future it feels a great interest. And I venture to predict that if the hon. Member should succeed in escaping from that sword of Damocles which is always hanging over his head, and should not be banished to another place—and I know that if it were in his power he would escape that fate—I venture to say that 20 years hence the hon. Member will hold very different opinions, and that, if he is still a Member of this House, he, in common with his colleagues, will receive a payment for his services. There is no question which has made a greater or more rapid advance than the present question. I entirely agree with my hon. and learned Friend behind me that it is the inevitable consequence of the great extension of the suffrage and the mark of a democratic age. I am not going to rest this case at all upon the example of other countries. I think that what the hon. Baronet opposite said in his very thoughtful and becoming speech was true upon that subject. It was a signal contrast to another which we heard. I hope that that speech did not represent the opinions of Gentlemen who sit opposite; and that when the example of one of the greatest colonies of England is cited it will not be treated as a "Botany Bay affair." In my opinion, language of that sort used in the House of Commons is most injurious to this Empire, and I hope that language of that insulting character will be repudiated by every right-thinking Member of this House. I will say the same thing of the unjust imputations cast from the other side of the House, apparently with approbation, upon that great body the County Council of London, who are doing a great and good work for this Metropolis—[*Cries of* "Oh!" *and cheers*];—and I hope that the language which we have listened to to-night will meet with general reprobation. I pass from that speech, which was a most unworthy contribution to the Debate, and I turn willingly to the speech of the hon. Baronet. He said that there was a great, leisured class in this country, and that that class had rendered great and gratuitous service to the nation. So it has. We ought all to recognise that, and the immense advantages which the services of that class have rendered generation after generation to this country. But everybody who has considered the subject must have felt that it is true of this House, as was said by Lord Salisbury of the other House of Parliament, that we are too much of one class, and that this House, having regard to the great extension of the popular suffrage, does not sufficiently represent all classes of the community in the

Members who are returned to it. Now, the hon. Member on the Front Bench opposite has drawn pictures of the various classes of Members undesirable in this House, who might be returned in consequence of remuneration being given to Members of Parliament; but I would call his attention to the fact that all these suspicions are founded upon the conception and the belief in the incompetence of the constituencies to judge of the people they will return. Does he imagine that the constituencies of this country are not able to distinguish between a needy adventurer endeavouring to get into Parliament to earn a salary and a man who, though having a humbler fortune, is a man as worthy as anybody else to occupy a seat in this House? The whole of the hon. Gentleman's speculations and alarms are entirely founded on a conception on his part that the constituencies are not able to form a sound judgment. Something has been said of personal corruption. Well, there were days when the House of Commons was very generally corrupt. Those were not the days of democracy. If you go back to the middle of last century, those were the days when in the House of Commons the power of the Crown and the power of the aristocracy was in the ascendant; and therefore to say that because you are going to admit a larger number of men who have small means you will by that introduce corruption to Parliament is, in my opinion, an entirely unjust conclusion. I believe that among the working classes of this country there is as great, I will say a greater, horror of pecuniary corruption than among any other class, and that the man suspected of practices of that kind would be repudiated and rejected by any constituency in the country. The hon. Member opposite has said that the House of Commons has lost, and is losing, the respect and confidence of the country. I do not believe that. I think that would be a very extraordinary result of having given the choice of Members of this House to a far larger proportion of the people of this country. I cannot share the pessimism of the hon. Member on that subject, nor do I see how the House of Commons is going to lose much of the respect and more of the confidence of the country because it embraces within its numbers a greater variety of the representatives of the different classes in the country. Now it is unnecessary that I should go at length into the arguments put forward. I have had the honour on more than one occasion of stating the views I entertain on this subject. I have said that, in my opinion, the proposals in this Resolution are wise and expedient, and I think the hon. Member who has just sat down will do me the credit to believe me when I say that if I did not believe that it would conduce to the strength, to the character, and to the honour of the House of Commons, I should not be here to support this Resolution to-night. There is nothing that is dearer to me than the honour and character of the House of Commons. Now, Sir, let us look at this Resolution. The hon. Baronet opposite said that the speech of the Mover of the Resolution had struck the word "forthwith" out of the Resolution. When we were discussing this matter before, I asked a question as to the meaning of the word "forthwith;" and it was expounded by the Mover of the Resolution on that occasion that it meant "as soon as practicable." But he has now given a more protracted meaning to the word, because he has declared to-night that he does not think that this Resolution ought to take effect within the present Parliament, because there would be something unbecoming in voting a salary to ourselves. I confess I do not feel that. If the thing is right, it is just as right for the present Parliament as for any other, and I confess I do not see any distinction; and it is a very doubtful piece of policy to pass an Act of Parliament which you say is not to operate on the present House of Commons. It seems to me that the logical conclusion of the hon. Member's argument is that the constituencies when they elect the next Parliament should decide upon this question themselves. I have been addressed in two tones, as it were. There was the tone of the Mover of the Resolution, who warned me to count the cost—of course, we shall have to count the cost. He warned me of the serious consequences that might ensue in a minatory tone. Then there was the tone of the Seconder of the Resolution, whose persuasive tone I prefer to the minatory tone of the Mover. I say, as I have said before, that this is a question of time and of money, as the Prime Minister told the deputation that waited upon him. As to Money, I shall be able soon to give the House more information than I am able to at present. As to time, the House is really more master of that than I am, but my opinion upon this subject and my desires are what they have been, and when I have the time and the means to promote the objects laid down in this Resolution I shall do what I can to further them. When I have the opportunity I will do what I can to give effect to the principle embodied in this Resolution.

Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): It appears to me that, at all events to-night, we are going to plough a furrow in the sand. Any decision upon the Resolution is to be absolutely nugatory. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has made an enigmatical speech, and no one knows whether he proposes in his Budget to submit to the House an estimate for the cost which will be involved if this Resolution is carried out. But I rather gather that that is not to be the case, and I understand that the Party opposite are perfectly prepared to remit this subject to a future Parliament. I wish to make our position on this side of the House perfectly clear. I do not believe there is a single person on this side of the House who does not welcome every genuine representative of the working class. We wish to have in this House the representatives of that class, and I am certain that I represent the opinion of both sides of this House when I say that the experience which we have had of the working-class Members in our midst has been such as to make us proud of their association with us and to make us desire that they may increase in numbers. It is from no desire to exclude any single working man that most of my hon. Friends on this side of the House are opposed to this Resolution. But we do not believe that the passing of a Resolution of this kind will increase the numbers of working-class Members in this House. There is not in the countries where there are paid members a single Parliament which numbers among its members as many genuine working men as sit in the British House of Commons. There are paid members in France, in Germany, and in other countries, but in none of the Continental Parliaments are there as many working men as sit in this House. If there be a genuine desire to have more working men in this House they will come here and constituencies will return them. Is there not some hypocrisy among hon. Members opposite on this question? When working men have come forward prepared to sit in this House, notwithstanding that they are not paid, have hon. Members opposite, their leaders and organisers, made the necessary efforts to secure their return? Look at Bristol. There was an opportunity for a working man to be elected to this House. [*Ministerial Cries of* "He is not a working man;" *and Laughter*]. Hon. Members may laugh, but there are many constituencies where working men have come forward and have been opposed by Gladstonians.

I say it is not the question of expense that has kept them out of the House, and if we on this side oppose the payment of Members it is upon the ground that it will generally lower the status of the whole House of Commons, and because we do not believe that it will increase the number of working men here. It is another class that will benefit by the change, the professional-politician class, men who will lay themselves out in order to make an income by sitting in this House. I honestly believe that the status of a Member will be lowered by payment. That is what has happened elsewhere. Have not the populace pointed at representatives coming from the French Assembly, saying: "There go the 20-franc men, the men who have been paid?" If you introduce a system of paid members, they will be considered more as delegates and less as representatives. I entirely endorse what was said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—that he himself is anxious for the dignity of the House. I believe we are all anxious to maintain its traditions and that no greater blow could be struck at the general position Members of Parliament hold in the country than by passing a Measure of this kind. I earnestly say that if I thought it would be a Measure which would assist in making the House more representative that would be the greatest argument in its favour. We all desire to see working men amongst us. We believe it is possible now that they should be represented. There are many constituences where men would gladly give way to have a working-man representative. We should not promote that result, but the return of a number of Members less desirable than those who sit in this House if we passed this Resolution. Therefore, I trust, our vote will not be misunderstood. It is not a vote against democracy or against working-class Members, but against putting Members of the House on a footing on which they would less command the general respect of the community, and that respect which I trust we shall long continue to enjoy.

The House divided:—Ayes, 158; Noes, 176.—(Division List No. 34.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added:"—

And, it being after Midnight, and Objection being taken to further proceeding, MR. SPEAKER proceeded to interrupt the business.

Whereupon Mr. WILLIAM ALLEN rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put:"—

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question, "That those words be there added," put accordingly, and agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved,—That, as the principle of gratuitous public service, upon which the representation of this House is at present based, limits the freedom of constituencies in the selection of the Representatives, this House is of opinion that a reasonable allowance should forthwith be granted to all Members of Parliament.—*(Mr. William Allen.)*

COURTS OF LAW FEES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of the Lord Advocate, Bill to provide for the Regulation of Fees Payable in the Courts of Law in Scotland.

Bill presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Friday next, and to be printed.—[Bill 178.]

Adjourned at a Quarter after Twelve o'clock till Monday next.

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TO

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION).

VOLUME XXXI. FOURTH SERIES.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1895.

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Bills, Read 1^a, 1^o, 2^a, 2^o, 3^a, 3^o. Read the First, Second, or Third Time.
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Intro. Introduction.
l. Lords.
Obs. Observations.
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GIBBS, Mr. V., *Herts, St. Albans*
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  - Bantry *Feb* 28, 45
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An hon. Member asked whether he could discuss certain questions on the Vote, and he was answered in the negative *Mar* 5, 429
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The discussion must be confined to the points before the Committee *Mar* 5, 418
An hon. Member was called to order *Mar* 5, 424
The Chairman said that he could not allow any discussion on a ruling given *Mar* 5, 430
Mercantile Marine Fund
The Vote only had reference to lighthouses *Mar* 5, 432
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Balfour (Jabez Spencer)—An hon. Member was asked whether he moved the reduction or not *Mar* 5, 456
The hon. Member's argument did not apply *Mar* 7, 591
Relief of Distress in Ireland
The hon. Member was going further than the lines indicated. The discussion must be confined to the Vote. *Mar* 7, 609
County Courts
The Chairman thought a Supplementary Vote merely for paying a small amount, in excess of the amount already provided, that this matter ought not to be raised. The general question should be raised on the main, and not on the supplemental, Estimates *Mar* 7, 617
Scotch Law Charges
The Chairman thought the hon. and learned Member need not assume that imputations had been made; and though he did not wish to interrupt him, was obliged to point out that he must confine himself to the question before the Committee *Mar* 7, 630
Public Education in England and Wales
The Chairman said the policy and action of the Administration were not under discussion, and the Supplementary Estimate was due to an under-estimate of average attendance, and of the rate of grant payable thereon *Mar* 7, 639
The Chairman thought there was a broad distinction between an Ordinary and a Supplementary Estimate. As a rule, unless a Supplementary Estimate was of an extraordinary or excessive character, the general discussion of policy should be confined to the first and main Vote. The present Supplementary Estimate was not of such a character, and accordingly it seemed to him a general discussion of policy would be entirely out of order *Mar* 7, 643

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GOLDSMID, Sir JULIAN—*cont.*
Miscellaneous Rulings—*Mar* 5, 418, 424, 429, 430, 456; *Mar* 7, 591, 627, 638, 640, 641, 644

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GOURLEY, Mr. E. T., *Sunderland*
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Grand Juries (Ireland) Bill
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Grand Juries (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill
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Grand Juries (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill—cont.
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Navy Estimates
  Admiralty Administration *Mar* 11, 841
  £4,133,500 for Wages *Mar* 18, 1305
Post Office and National Telephone Company *Mar* 1, 219

LOWTHER, Right Hon. JAMES, *Kent, Thanet*
Business of the House *Mar* 15, 1155; *Mar* 19, 1384
Influenza *Mar* 5, 382
Justices of the Peace Bill 2R. *Mar* 20, 1497, 1504
Margarine *Mar* 19, 1370
Rating of Machinery Bill 3R. *Mar* 15, 1244
Shrinkage of the Markets and British Manufactures *Mar* 15, 1226, 1235, 1237, 1238, 1239
Supply
  Distress in Ireland—Relief of *Mar* 7, 602
  Miscellaneous Legal Expenses *Mar* 7, 591, 593, 597, 598
  Public Education in England and Wales *Mar* 8, 657
  Scotch Law Charges *Mar* 7, 620, 622, 623

LOWTHER, Mr. J. W., *Cumberland, Penrith*
Army Estimates: Cyprus—Grant in Aid of *Mar* 19, 1394, 1395, 1396

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LOWTHER, Mr. J. W.—*cont.*
- Death of Sir Robert Duff—The *Mar* 15, 1155
- Navy Estimates — £4,133,500 for Wages, *Mar* 18, 1327, 1328, 1332, 1334, 1335, 1336, 1337, 1342

(Rulings as Chairman of Committee.)

- *Temporary Commissions—Secondary Education*
  - If the hon. Member desires to discuss it, he must confine himself strictly to the composition of the Commission, and must be careful not to deal with the general question of secondary education, which would be quite out of order on this Vote *Mar* 19, 1436
  - It is perfectly clear that when the question has been once put in regard to a particular subject, the discussion must be confined to that particular subject *Mar* 19, 1437
- *Miscellaneous Rulings Mar* 19, 1431, 1437
- Supply
  - Cyprus—Grant in Aid *Mar* 8, 690
  - Foreign Office *Mar* 5, 425
  - Houses of Parliament *Mar* 5, 419
  - Miscellaneous Legal Expenses *Mar* 5, 453
  - Prison Warders' Allowance *Mar* 11, 774
  - Slave Trade in Zanzibar and Pemba *Mar* 8, 673, 674

LUBBOCK, Sir J., *London University*
- Boards of Conciliation Bill, *Motion* for 2R. *Mar* 20, 1518
- Business of the House *Feb* 28, 81
- Chelsea Water (Transfer) Bill, 2R. *Feb* 28, 4, 5
- Lambeth Water (Transfer) Bill *Feb* 28, 8; *Mar* 7, 530
- Supply: Cyprus—Grant in Aid *Mar* 8, 692

Lunacy
- *Increase of Lunatics, Q.* Dr. Kenny; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 18, 1254

LUTTRELL, Mr. H. C. F., *Devon, Tavistock*
- Customs Boatmen *(Motion) Mar* 6, 524
- Dartmoor—Artillery Firing *Feb* 28, 9
- Justices of the Peace Bill, 2R. *Mar* 20, 1486
- Prisons Clerical Staff *Mar* 21, 1538
- Rebellion in Hawaii *Mar* 19, 1367

LYELL, Sir LEONARD, *Orkney and Shetland*
- Scotch Fishing Harbour *Mar* 21, 1541
- Woods and Forests—Commissioners of *Feb* 28, 53

MACARTNEY, Mr. W. E.. *Antrim, S.*
- Board of Guardians (Ireland) Bill, 2R. *Mar* 13, 992, 994, 1000, 1012, 1020
- Firing into a Dwelling-house *Mar* 22, 1692
- Intimidation in Cavan County—Charges of *Mar* 5, 388
- Irish Magistrates *Mar* 11, 749, 750
- Isle of Achill *Mar* 19, 1369
- Land Bill (Ireland) *Mar* 4, 338
- Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 20, 1476, 1480, 1485

MACDONA, Mr. J. C., *Southwark, Rotherhithe*
- "*Elbe*"—Loss of the *Feb* 28, 26, 27
- English Girls at Amsterdam *Mar* 5, 375
- Justices of the Peace Bill 2R. *Mar* 20, 1511
- Ocean Derelicts *Mar* 4, 284, 285; *Mar* 15, 1150, 1151; *Mar* 18, 1254; *Mar* 21, 1563

MACDONALD, Mr. J. A. M., *Tower Hamlets, Bow*
- Weights and Measures Act (1889) *Mar* 11, 760
- Window Cleaning *Mar* 7, 537

MACFARLANE, Sir D. H., *Argyllshire*
- Army Estimates—155,403 Men for Home and Colonial Establishments *Mar* 15, 1200
- Crofters Act—The *Mar* 11, 771, 772
- Crofters' Dog Licences *Feb* 28, 11
- Day and Evening Schools *Mar* 1, 164
- Kilninan and Kilmore *Mar* 14, 1057
- Mull Telegraph Cable *Mar* 19, 1372
- Steam Trawlings in the Highlands *Mar* 19, 1371
- Supply
  - Cyprus—Grant in Aid of *Mar* 19, 1397, 1398, 1399
  - Miscellaneous Legal Expenses *Mar* 7, 592
- Tweed Fishery Acts *Mar* 5, 380

MACGREGOR, Dr. D., *Inverness-shire*
- Afforestation in the Highlands *Mar* 12, 881
- Beam Trawling *Mar* 14, 1039
- Crofters Act—The *Mar* 11, 772
- Falls of Foyers—The *Mar* 7, 542; *Mar* 22, 1688
- Feus and Leases in Scotland *Mar* 5, 385
- Highland Land Bill *Mar* 5, 382, 383
- Home Rule for Scotland *Mar* 5, 391
- Illegal Trawling—Alleged *Mar* 5, 384
- Irish Seed Potatoes *Mar* 14, 1058
- Navy Estimates — £4,133,500 for Wages *Mar* 18, 1310, 1311, 1312
- Roads in the Hebrides *Mar* 5, 384
- Scotch Salmon Fisheries *Mar* 12, 881
- Scotch Mines Inspection *Mar* 7, 552
- Skye Steamboat Service *Mar* 7, 557
- Tweed Fishery Acts *Mar* 5, 380
- Western Highlands and Islands Works Acts *Mar* 21, 1559
- West Highland Railway Company *Mar* 5, 383

MACLURE, Mr. J. W., *Lancashire, S.E., Stretford*
- Army Pay Corps—The *Mar* 12, 872

MACNAGHTEN, Lord
- Solicitors (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 5, 369

MACNEILL, Mr. J. G. S., *Donegal, S.*
- Distress in Donegal *Mar* 14, 1029, 1030, 1031
- Four Courts Officers *Mar* 21, 1565
- Relief Works in Ireland *Mar* 22, 1694, 1695
- Steam Trawling in Donegal Bay *Mar* 12, 878

McCarthy, Mr. J., *Longford, N.*
Board of Guardians (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 13, 1014

McGilligan, Mr. P., *Fermanagh, S.*
Road Contractors in Ireland *Mar* 14, 1043

M'Hugh, Mr. P. A., *Leitrim, N.*
Carrying Arms in Ireland *Feb* 28, 14
Congested Districts Board *Feb* 28, 14 ; *Mar* 18, 1263, 1265
Old Abbey Burial Ground, Sligo *Mar* 14, 1041
Sligo Post Office *Mar* 14, 1040

McLeod, Mr. J., *Sutherland*
Crofters' Commission—The *Mar* 12, 887

Mains, Mr. J., *Donegal, N.*
Croagh Dispensary Committee *Mar* 1, 157
Steam Trawlers in Galway Bay *Feb* 28, 29
Suspension of an Irish Postmaster *Mar* 1, 159

Maple Sir J. Blundell, *Camberwell, Dulwich*
Lambeth Water (Transfer Bill) *Mar* 7, 530

Market Gardeners' Compensation Bill
2R. Colonel Long, 520, 521 ; Mr. T. M. Healy, 521 ; Mr. Channing, 521 ; Mr. Collings, 521—*Mar* 6
Read 2° *Mar* 6, 521
Colonel Long (*Moved* to refer Bill to Standing Committee) ; *Obs.* Mr. Channing, Mr. Crilly, Mr. Bromley Davenport *(Motion deferred) Mar* 11, 856

Market Gardeners' Compensation (No. 2) Bill
2R. Mr. Channing, Mr. T. M. Healy *Mar* 6, 523
Read 2° *Mar* 6, 523
Com. to Standing Com. on Trade *Mar* 12, 968

Martin, Mr. R. B., *Worcester, Droitwich*
Balfour (Jabez Spencer) *Mar* 7, 569
Recreation Grounds *Mar* 4, 273

Matthews, Right Hon. H., *Birmingham, E.*
Burials Bill, 2R. *Mar* 6, 507, 508, 513
Established Church (Wales) Bill *Mar* 22, 1723
Factories and Workshops Bill *Mar* 1, 184

Maxwell, Mr. W. J , *Dumfriesshire*
Solway and Tweed Fisheries *Mar* 11, 770, 771

Maxwell, Sir H. E., *Wigtonshire*
Standing Committee (Scotland) *Feb* 28, 21
Supply—Scotch Law Charges *Mar* 7, 625
Village of St. Ninians - The *Mar* 7, 561

Mayo, Earl of
Stranorlar and Glenties Railway *Mar* 21, 1521, 1522, 1523

MELLOR, Right Hon. J. W. (Chairman of Committees of Ways and Means, and Deputy Speaker), *York W. R., Sowerby*

(Rulings as Chairman of Committees)
Navy Estimates
The Chairman pointed out that when the Annual Loan Bill came on, the hon. Member would be able to discuss the financial aspect *Mar* 18, 1281
The general question of Naval Expenditure must not be entered upon, except so far as the Vote is concerned *Mar* 18, 1287, 1288
The Chairman considered that the hon. Member was going beyond the particular Vote, and touching upon matters germane to general discussion *Mar* 18, 1289
The Chairman said that the hon. Member was travelling beyond the limits of the Vote before the Committee *Mar* 18, 1292
The Chairman considered that no Question about the "*Victoria*" arose on the Vote *Mar* 18, 1319
The reason that general discussion is permissible is that Vote 1 concerns the manning of the Navy, and it is not in order to discuss a matter which is not connected with the subject of the Vote *Mar* 18, 1320
Miscellaneous Rulings
Mar 18, 1311, 1312, 1316, 1346, 1347

MERCHANT SHIPPING
Beam Trawling, Q. Dr. Macgregor ; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 14, 1039
Dingle Pier, Kerry County, Q. Sir T. Esmonde ; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Mar* 7, 538
"*Elbe*" *Disaster, Qs.* Mr. J. C. Macdona, Admiral Field, Sir E. Harland ; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Feb* 28, 26
Fishery Board, Q. Mr. Buchanan ; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1545
Fishing Harbours, Q. Sir L. Lyell ; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1541
Iceland Fisheries, Q. Mr. J. G. Weir ; *A.* Sir E. Grey *Mar* 21, 1564
Killeybegs Pier, Q. Mr. Hayden ; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Mar* 7, 532
Kilronan Pier, Arran Island, Q. Mr. Sheehy ; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Mar* 14, 1028
Lighting of the Scotch Coasts, Q. Mr. Weir ; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 19, 1375
Loss of the—
"*Port Yarrock,*" *Qs.* Mr. J. H. Wilson ; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 12, 875
"*Waldridge,*" *Q.* Mr. Wyndham ; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 15, 1145
Ocean Derelicts, Q. Mr. J. C. Macdona ; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 4, 284 ; *Mar* 15, 1150. *Q.* Mr. J. C. Macdona ; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 18, 1254. *Q.* Mr. J. C. Macdona ; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 21, 1563

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MERCHANT SHIPPING—cont.
- *Shannon Navigation*, *Q.* Mr. Tully; *A.* Sir J. T. Hibbert *Mar* 19, 1361
- *Skye Steamboat Service*, *Q.* Dr. Macgregor; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 7, 557
- *Steam Trawlers in—*
  - *Donegal Bay*, *Q.* Mr. MacNeill; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Mar* 12, 878
  - *Galway Bay*, *Q.* Mr. J. Mains; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Feb* 28, 29
  - *The Highlands*, *Q.* Sir D. Macfarlane; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 19, 1371
- *Trawling—Alleged Illegal*, *Q.* Dr. Macgregor; *A.* Mr. J. B. Balfour *Mar* 5, 384
- *Wicklow Harbour Pier*, *Q.* Mr. Sweetman; *A.* Sir J. T. Hibbert *Feb* 28, 31
- *Zetland Pier at Adrigole*, *Q.* Mr. Gilhooly; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Feb* 28, 14. *Q.* Mr. Gilhooly; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Mar* 18, 1250

Metropolitan District Railway Bill
- 2R. Major Darwin 265; Mr. H. Kimber 266; Sir A. K. Rollit, 267; Mr. G. Howell, 267; Mr. Bryce, 267—*Mar* 4
- Read 2° *Mar* 4, 268

METROPOLIS
- *Chelsea Water (Transfer) Bill* 2R. Sir F. Dixon-Hartland, 4, 6; Sir J. Lubbock, 4, 5; Mr. J. Stuart, 5, 6; Mr. F. G. Banbury, 5, 6—*Feb* 28
- *Defence of London*, *Qs.* Colonel H. Vincent, Colonel Lockwood; *As.* Mr. Woodall *Mar* 11, 748
- *Drivers and Conductors' Licences*, *Q.* Captain Norton; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 14, 1039
- *Lambeth Water (Transfer) Bill (Motion by* Mr. J. Stuart), Mr. Boulnois 7; Mr. J. Stuart, 7, 8; Mr. E. W. Byrne, 7; Colonel Lockwood, 8; Sir J. Lubbock, 8; Mr. S. Buxton, 8; Mr. V. Gibbs, 8—*Feb* 28
  Mr. J. Stuart, 268, 270, 272; Mr. E. W. Byrne, 269, 270; Mr. R. G. Webster, 269, 270; Sir F. Dixon-Hartland, 270, 272; Mr. H. Kimber, 270; Mr. Bartley, 271; Mr. Boulnois, 271; Mr. W. L. Jackson, 271; Mr. Halsey, 271—*Mar* 4
  Mr. J. Stuart *(Motion)*, 529, 530; Mr. R. G. Webster, 529; Sir J. Blundell Maple, 530; Sir J. Lubbock, 530—*Mar* 7
- *London and Provincial Rates*, *Q.* Mr. Webster; *A.* Mr. Shaw Lefevre *Mar* 14, 1041
- *London Carmen*, *Qs.* Captain Norton; *As.* Mr. Asquith *Feb* 8, 12
- *London Letter Carriers*, *Q.* Mr. Brookfield; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 1, 162
- *Marylebone Western National School*, *Q.* Mr. Snape; *A.* Mr. Acland *Mar* 1, 160
- *Metropolitan Cab Service*, *Q.* Mr. Lough; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Feb* 28, 18
- *Metropolitan District Railway Bill* (see that title)
- *Pleuro-pneumonia in London*, *Q.* Sir A. K. Rollit; *A.* Mr. H. Gardner *Mar* 14, 1058
- *Separation of Indoor Paupers*, *Q.* Mr. Cohen; *A.* Mr. Shaw Lefevre *Feb* 28, 52
- *Thames Embankment*, *Q.* Mr. Banbury; *A.* Mr. Shaw Lefevre *Feb* 28, 12
- *Unification of London*, *Q.* Mr. H. S. Foster; *A.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 7, 563

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS
- "*Bond Tea*," *Q.* Mr. Frye; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 12, 880
- *Cage Accidents*, *Q.* Mr. D. Thomas; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 18, 1255
- *Co-operative Credit*, *Q.* Mr. Yerburgh; *A.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 18, 1268
- *Disorderly Houses*, *Q.* Mr. S. Smith; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 14, 1034
- *Duff (Sir Robert)—Death of*, *Q.* Mr. J. W. Lowther; *A.* Mr. S. Buxton *Mar* 15, 1155
- *Duty on Spirits*, *Qs.* Mr. J. Redmond; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 7, 564
- *Influenza*, *Qs.* Mr. Aird, Mr. J. Lowther; *As.* Sir W. Foster *Mar* 5, 382
- *Lift Accidents*, *Q.* Mr Hazell; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 4, 274
- *Lord Charles Beresford*, *Qs.* Mr. Darling, Sir J. E. Gorst, Mr. T. G. Bowles; *As.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 7, 546
- *Lunatics*, *Q.* Dr. Kenny; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 18, 1254
- *Margarine*, *Qs.* Mr. W. O'Brien, Mr. J. Lowther; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 19, 1369
- *Metalliferous Mines*, *Q.* Mr. D. Ainsworth; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 7, 542
- *Rabies in Dogs*, *Qs.* Major Rasch, Mr. Forwood; *As.* Mr. Gardner *Mar* 11, 751
- *Suicides*, *Q.* Admiral Field; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 14, 1051
- *Window Cleaning*, *Q.* Mr. J. A. M. Macdonald; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 7, 537

MORGAN, Mr. W. PRITCHARD, *Merthyr Tydvil*
- Breach of Contract at a Welsh Colliery *Mar* 14, 1050

MORGAN, Sir G. O., *Denbighshire*
- Burials Bill 2R. *Mar* 6, 504
- Established Church (Wales) Bill *Feb* 28, 102, 103, 116; *Mar* 21, 1601; *Mar* 22, 1747
- Pistols Bill—Brought up Report of the Grand Committee on Law *Mar* 19, 1360

MORLEY, RIGHT HON. ARNOLD (Postmaster General), *Nottingham, E.*
- Delivery of Letters in Llanelidau *Mar* 11, 757
- Dublin Post Office Clerks *Mar* 12, 890
- Edinburgh Telegraphists *Mar* 21, 1567
- Fairview Post Office, Dublin County *Mar* 7, 555
- Irish
  - Mails *Mar* 12, 890; *Mar* 21, 1569, 1570
  - Postal Arrangements *Mar* 14, 1046
- Isle of Achill *Mar* 19, 1369
- London Letter Carriers *Mar* 1, 162
- Money Order Post Cards *Mar* 15, 1150
- Mull Telegraph Cable *Mar* 19, 1372
- Naval Reserve Fund and the Post Office *Mar* 12, 871
- New Zealand Post Office and Trades Unions *Mar* 14, 1038
- Norwich Post Office *Mar* 4, 281
- Parcel Post
  - Baskets *Feb* 28, 22
  - Rates *Feb* 28, 41; *Mar* 4, 277

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- Postal
  - Orders *Mar* 12, 884
  - Rates *Mar* 15, 1143
  - Union Congress *Mar* 15, 1148
- Postmen's Holidays, *Feb* 28, 27
- Post Office
  - Clerkships *Feb* 28, 23
  - And National Telephone Company *Mar* 1, 213, 215, 216, 218, 219, 233
  - Sligo *Mar* 14, 1040
  - Sorters *Mar* 21, 1555
  - Uniforms *Mar* 21, 1552, 1553
- Sheffield Telegraphists *Mar* 19, 1362
- Skye Steamboat Service *Mar* 7, 557
- Suspension of an Irish Postmaster *Mar* 1, 159
- Telegraph
  - Code Words, *Mar* 15, 1147
  - Facilities—Wexford County *Mar* 11, 770
  - Money Orders, *Mar* 12, 884
  - Service (Ireland) *Feb* 28, 16
  - Service Promotion *Mar* 11, 776
- Telephone
  - Service *Mar* 13, 1024
  - Service Committee *Mar* 21, 1570
- Telephones *Feb* 28, 27
- Territorial System—The *Mar* 14, 1139
- Wages of Post Office Servants *Mar* 11, 779

MORLEY, RIGHT HON. JOHN (Chief Secretary for Ireland), *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

- Action against Irish Constables *Mar* 21, 1546
- Ballina Union, Mayo—The *Mar* 21, 1571
- Belfast Guardians *Mar* 21, 1568
- Board of Guardians (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 13, 987, 1007, 1012, 1013, 1018, 1019
- Boat Slips in Kerry *Mar* 5, 381
- Carlow Crown Solicitor—The *Mar* 22, 1687
- Carrying Arms (Ireland) *Feb* 28, 14 ; *Mar* 11, 753, 754
- Chair of Agriculture at Queen's College, Galway *Mar* 11, 773
- Christian Brothers—The *Mar* 1, 163 ; *Mar* 5, 385 ; *Mar* 21, 1571
- Civil Bill Courts, Cavan County *Mar* 7, 542
- Clifden Union, Ireland *Mar* 19, 1377
- Congested Districts Board (Ireland) *Feb* 28, 15 ; *Mar* 1, 164 ; *Mar* 18, 1264, 1266
- Conlan Estate, Wexford County *Mar* 5, 387 ; *Mar* 12, 878
- Cork and Muskerry Light Railways *Feb* 28, 50
- Croagh Dispensary Committee *Mar* 1, 157
- Co-tenancy and the Marquess of Sligo *Mar* 5, 390
- Defalcations of Cess Collectors *Mar* 1, 158
- Derry Union—Infectious Diseases *Feb* 28, 33
- Dingle Pier, Kerry County *Mar* 7, 539
- Distress in
  - Bantry *Feb* 28, 45 ; *Mar* 18, 1261
  - Bawnboy Union *Mar* 18, 1260
  - Cavan County *Mar* 7, 549
  - Clare County *Mar* 11, 754
  - Cork County *Mar* 5, 379 ; *Mar* 18, 1259, 1261
  - Donegal, *Mar* 1, 158 ; *Mar* 11, 755, 756 ; *Mar* 14, 1029, 1030, 1031 ; *Mar* 18, 1261 ; *Mar* 19, 1363
  - Ennis *Mar* 18, 1259

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- Distress in—*cont.*
  - Galway County *Mar* 14, 1028, 1029, 1032
  - Golleen *Mar* 1, 157
  - Gort Union *Mar* 14, 1028
  - Kenmare *Feb* 28, 30 ; *Mar* 11, 756
  - Kerry County *Mar* 5, 378 ; *Mar* 19, 1363
  - Leitrim *Mar* 14, 1033
  - Limerick *Mar* 18, 1260
  - Loughrea Union *Mar* 12, 883
  - Newcastle West *Feb* 28, 46
  - Roscommon County *Mar* 11, 755
  - Sligo *Mar* 14, 1032
- Donegal—Polling Places in *Feb* 28, 33
- Education (Ireland)—National Board of *Mar* 1, 163
- Evicted Tenants in Ireland *Mar* 12, 891, 892
- Firing into a Dwelling-house *Mar* 22, 1692
- Frost and School Attendance *Mar* 7, 538 ; *Mar* 14, 1063
- Galway
  - Cess in County *Mar* 11, 752 ; *Mar* 18, 1262
  - Steam Trawlers in the Bay *Feb* 28, 29
- Government Business *Feb* 28, 127
- Intimidation in Cavan County—Charges of *Mar* 5, 389
- Irish
  - Estates *Mar* 14, 1047, 1048
  - Magistrates *Mar* 11, 749, 750
- Killybegs Pier *Mar* 7, 533
- Kilronan Pier, Arran Islands *Mar* 14, 1028
- Labourers
  - Acts (Ireland) *Feb* 28, 28
  - Cottages *Mar* 7, 551, 552 ; *Mar* 11, 766, *Mar* 18, 1251
  - Plots *Mar* 5, 377
- Land Bill (Ireland) *Mar* 1, 165 ; *Mar* 4, 295, 297, 302, 313, 315, 317, 318, 326, 327, 358, 365 ; *Mar* 6, 469
- Moffett—Case of Dr. *Feb* 28, 25, 26
- Monaghan Assizes *Mar* 22, 1697, 1698
- Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 20, 1477, 1478, 1480, 1481, 1484, 1485
- Old Abbey Burial Grounds, Sligo *Mar* 14 1041
- Outdoor Relief in England *Mar* 18, 1275, 1276
- Outdoor Relief (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 22, 1748, 1749
- Owenmore Drainage Scheme, Sligo *Mar* 14, 1042
- Police in Cork County *Mar* 11, 765
- Poor Law Vote in Ireland *Mar* 11, 750
- Potatoes (Ireland)
  - Disease in *Mar* 21, 1545
  - Seed *Feb* 28, 30 ; *Mar* 12, 872, 873 ; *Mar* 14, 1058
- Public Health Officers (Ireland) *Mar* 12, 876
- Railway Extension in Ireland *Mar* 14, 1042
- Redemption of Rent Act (1891)—The *Mar* 1, 161
- Relief Works in Ireland *Mar* 14, 1043 ; *Mar* 15, 1156 ; *Mar* 22, 1695, 1696
- Road Contractors (Ireland) *Feb* 28, 52 ; *Mar* 11, 768 ; *Mar* 14, 1043
- Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Bill *Feb* 28, 128
- Steam Trawling in Donegal Bay *Mar* 12, 879
- Swine Fever *Mar* 5, 381 ; *Mar* 7, 540
- Swine Fever, Wexford Union *Mar* 12, 880
- Training Ship for Queenstown Harbour—A *Mar* 7, 569

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  Tubbercurry Union *Mar* 15, 1156
  Tuberculosis *Mar* 7, 531, 532
  Vaccinating School Children *Mar* 21, 1543
  Voters' Lists in Cork County—Sale of *Mar* 14, 1027
  Voters—Register of (Ireland) *Feb* 28, 46
  Zetland Pier, Adrigole *Feb* 28, 14 ; *Mar* 18, 1250

Morris, Lord
  Grand Juries (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill 2R. *(Motion) Mar* 19, 1358

Mortgagees' Costs Bill
  2R. Mr. Haldane, Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, Sir R. T. Reid *Mar* 7, 648
  Read 2° *Mar* 7, 648
  Con. in Com. R. P. *Mar* 14, 1140
  Passed through Com. ; Read 3° *Mar* 19, 1460

Morton, Mr. A C., *Peterborough*
  Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London (Baths and Wash-houses) Bill—In Com. *Mar* 15, 1243
  Falls of Foyers—The *Mar* 7, 542 ; *Mar* 22, 1688, 1689
  Navy Estimates — £4,133,500 for Wages *Mar* 18, 1320, 1324, 1327, 1328, 1336
  Post Office and National Telephone Company *Mar* 1, 239
  Supply
    County Courts *Mar* 7, 619
    Houses of Parliament *Mar* 5, 424
    Mercantile Marine Fund *Mar* 5, 431, 432, 433
    Scotch Law Charges *Mar* 7, 621
  Telephone
    Service *Mar* 13, 1024
    Service Committee *Mar* 21, 1570
  Water Supply and Fire *Mar* 21, 1566

Morton, Mr. E. J. C., *Devonport*
  Navy Estimates
    88,850 Men and Boys *Mar* 12, 957, 961, 963
    £4,133,500 for Wages *Mar* 18, 1284

Moulton, Mr. J. F., *Hackney, S.*
  Local Taxation in Urban Districts *Mar* 8, 706, 722
  Post Office and National Telephone Company *Mar* 1, 238

Mundella, Right Hon. A. J., *Sheffield, Brightside*
  Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill *Mar* 5, 402
  Factories and Workshops Bill *Mar* 1, 187
  Rule of the Road at Sea *Mar* 13, 1023—Debate on Motion for Select Com. *Mar* 20, 1520
  Shrinkage of the Markets and British Manufactures *Mar* 15, 1238

Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill
  2R. Mr. T. M. Healy, 1461, 1473, 1474, 1481 ; Mr. T. B. Curran, 1463 ; Sir A. K. Rollit, 1466 ; Mr. W. Field, 1470 ; Mr. D. B. Barton, 1471, 1473, 1474, 1475, 1478, 1481 ; Mr. T. Harrington, 1475 ; Mr. W. E. Macartney, 1476, 1480, 1485 ; Mr. J. Morley, 1477, 1478, 1480, 1481, 1484, 1485 ; Sir T. Lea, 1482 ; [Mr. Speaker, 1483 ;] Mr. A. J. Balfour, 1483. 1485—*Mar* 20
  Read 2° *Mar* 20, 1483
  Referred to Standing Committee on Law *Mar* 20, 1485

Muntz, Mr. P. A., *Warwickshire, Tamworth*
  Supply—Miscellaneous Legal Expenses *Mar* 7, 599

Murray, Mr. A. G., *Buteshire*
  Fatal Accidents Inquiry (Scotland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 11, 854

Myers, Mr. W. H., *Winchester*
  Army Estimates—115,403 Men for Home and Colonial Establishments *Mar* 15, 1193
  Parish Council Accounts *Mar* 21, 1551

Naoroji, Mr. D., *Finsbury, Central*
  Army Supply (Indian Contribution) *Mar* 14, 1105
  Indian Administrative Offices *Feb* 28, 42

Napier, Mr. M. F., *Roxburgh*
  Tweed Fishery Acts *Mar* 5, 380 ; *Mar* 12, 873

Naval Works (Consolidated Fund) Bill
  In Com., Resolved,—That it is expedient to make provision for the construction of works and acquisition of land in the United Kingdom, and in certain Colonies, for the purposes of the Royal Navy, and to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of sums not exceeding in the whole £1,000,000 for such purposes *Mar* 18, 1349
  In Com., Resolved,—That it is expedient to authorise the Treasury to borrow, for the purpose of providing money for sums to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund, or for the repayment of sums so issued, by means of terminable annuities, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for Naval Services ; and, if those moneys are insufficient, out of the Consolidated Fund *Mar* 18, 1349
  Resolutions reported and agreed to *Mar* 19, 1459
  c. Intro., Mr. Mellor ; Read 1° *Mar* 19, 1460

NAVY
  Accountant General's Department, Q. Mr. M. Austin ; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 7, 550
  Admiralty Department, Q. Captain Norton ; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 14, 1040
  Baltic and North Sea Canal, Q. Sir G. Baden-Powell ; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 11, 774

[*cont.*

NAVY—cont.

Barrow Deeps, *Q.* Major Rasch; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 7, 550
Belleville Boilers, *Q.* Mr. W. Johnston; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Feb* 28, 20
Beresford (Lord Charles) *Qs.* Mr. Darling, Sir J. E. Gorst, Mr. Bowles; *As.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 7, 546
Cocoa for the Royal Navy, *Q.* Admiral Field; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 7, 543
Contracts, *Q.* Colonel H. Vincent; *A.* Mr. E Robertson *Mar* 8, 649
Deptford Victualling Yard, *Qs.* Mr. Darling; *As.* Mr. E. Robertson *Feb* 28, 24; *Mar* 7, 555
Engine-room Artificers, *Q.* Mr. Howell; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Feb* 28, 17
Fitters and Shipwrights, *Q.* Mr. W. Hazell; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 7, 531
Greenwich Age Pensions, *Q.* Major Rasch; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 7, 532
H.M.S. "*Hornet*," *Q.* Mr. Gourley; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 21, 1573
Lifeboat Service, *Qs.* Mr. Bayley; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 19, 1380
Manning of the Navy, Lord Brassey, 1665; Lord Hood of Avalon, 1672; Earl Spencer, 1675—*Mar* 22
Naval
  Age Pensions (see Pensions)
  Manœuvres, *Q.* Mr. Penn; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 5, 372
  Reserve Fund and the Post Office, *Q.* Mr. Hayden; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 12, 870
Ocean Derelicts, *Q.* Mr. Macdona; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 21, 1563
Second Class Battleships, *Q.* Mr. Forwood; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 11, 761
Teak for H.M.'s Ships, *Q.* Mr. G. Whitelaw; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 22, 1684
Torpedo Catchers, *Q.* Mr. Gourley; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 11, 763
Training Ship
  "*Britannia*," *Qs.* Sir H. Howorth; *As.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 18, 1273
  "*Northampton*," *Q.* Mr. Weir; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 21, 1559
  Queenstown Harbour—For, *Q.* Captain Donelan; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Mar* 7, 569
Troopship "*Tamar*," *Q.* Mr. Gourley; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 19, 1379

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1895-96

Admiralty Administrations

Com., Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster *(Motion)*, 785, 812, 819, 830; Sir G. Chesney, 793; Sir E. J. Reed, 797; Sir C. W. Dilke, 800; Lord G. Hamilton, 808, 851; Mr. E. Robertson, 811, 812, 848, 849, 851; Sir R. Temple, 815, 817; Admiral Field, 817, 827; Mr. H. E. Kearley, 817, 819; Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, 821; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 823; Mr. E. T. Gourley, 826; Mr. W. Allan, 830, 849, 851; Mr. A. B. Forwood, 836; Mr. T. Lough, 841; Mr. J. Penn, 843; Sir F. H. Evans, 846; Mr. G. Wyndham, 847; Sir W. Harcourt, 847; Dr. G. B. Clark, 851—*Mar* 11

[*cont.*

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1895-6—cont.

Admiralty Administrations—cont.

In Com., Motion made to R. P., Mr. E. Robertson, 852; Com. R.P. *Mar* 11

88,850 *Men and Boys*

Com., Mr. E. Robertson, 894, 898, 910, 912, 922, 953, 967; Capt. Bethell, 898, 933, 936, 942; Mr. J. A. Chamberlain, 910; Lord G. Hamilton, 912, 913, 922, 967; Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 912; Sir E. Harland, 923, 936; Mr. H. E. Kearley, 929; Mr. G. Wyndham, 932; Sir E. J. Reed, 936, 944, 946, 949; Sir J. Baker, 939; Mr. G. W. Wolff, 941, 942, 946; Mr. W. Allan, 949; Mr. A. B. Forwood, 951, 953; Mr. G. Howell, 955; Mr. E. J. C. Morton, 957, 961, 963; Admiral Field, 961, 963. Vote agreed to *Mar* 12. Report *Mar* 13, 1021

£4,133,500 *for Wages*

Com., Mr. T. G. Bowles, 1276, 1281, 1284, 1290; The Chairman (Mr. J. W. Mellor), 1281, 1287, 1288, 1289, 1292, 1311, 1312, 1316, 1319, 1320; (Mr. J. W. Lowther), 1327, 1328, 1332, 1334, 1335, 1336, 1337, 1342; (Mr. J. W. Mellor), 1346, 1347; Mr. E. Robertson, 1282, 1283, 1284, 1285, 1306, 1336, 1338, 1341, 1345, 1347; Captain Bethell, 1283, 1298, 1319; Mr. E. J. C. Morton, 1284; Mr. H. E. Kearley, 1284, 1338 *(Amendt.)*, 1339, 1340 *(Amendt. withdrawn)*; Sir W. Lawson, 1286, 1288, 1289, 1290 *(Amendt.)*, 1298; Sir G. Baden-Powell, 1287, 1288, 1293; Sir W. Harcourt, 1288, 1330, 1336, 1344, 1348; Mr. W. Allan, 1291, 1292, 1317, 1340; Mr. H. Labouchere, 1294, 1297, 1329; Lord G. Hamilton, 1297, 1337, 1347; Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 1297, 1298; Mr. Arnold-Forster, 1299, 1342, 1347; Mr. C. H. Hopwood, 1301; Sir C. Dilke, 1302; Mr. T. Lough, 1305; Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, 1309; Mr. W. R. Cremer, 1309, 1312, 1315, 1316, 1319, 1320, 1321, 1337; Dr. D. Macgregor, 1310, 1311, 1312; Mr. W. Johnston, 1315; Mr. W. P. Byles, 1316, 1317, 1319, 1320; Mr. A. C. Morton, 1320, 1324, 1327, 1328, 1336; Sir R. Temple, 1320, 1321; Admiral Field, 1328, 1329; Sir J. E. Gorst, 1331, 1332; Mr. T. Snape, 1332; Sir W. Wedderburn, 1333; Major Rasch, 1334; Colonel Lockwood, 1334; Mr. J. G. Weir, 1334, 1335; Sir E. Harland, 1335, 1336, 1346, 1347; Mr. A. J. Balfour, 1336 (*Division* 1337), 1345; Sir J. Baker, 1340; Mr. G. Wyndham, 1341; Mr. A. B. Forwood, 1344, 1345; Mr. R.W. Hanbury, 1347. Vote agreed to, 1348 *Mar* 18. Report *Mar* 19, 1459

£200,000 *for Materials, Works, Repairs, &c. (Supplementary)*

Com., Lord G. Hamilton; Mr. E. Robertson; Mr. Hanbury *Mar* 18, 1348. Vote agreed to and R.P. *Mar* 18, 1349. Report *Mar* 19, 1459

[*cont.*

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1895-6—cont.
£49,519. 9s. 2d. *for the Excess of Naval Expenditure beyond the Ordinary Navy Grant for the year ended March 31st*, 1894
Com., Mr. A. B. Forwood, 1440, 1442; Mr. E. Robertson, 1442; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 1442. Vote agreed to *Mar* 19, 1442. Report *Mar* 20, 1520

NOLAN, Colonel J. P., *Galway, N.*
Christian Brothers—The *Mar* 1, 162, 163; *Mar* 5, 385; *Mar* 21, 1571
Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill *Mar* 22, 1698
Distress in Tuam *Mar* 4, 284
Relief Works in Ireland *Mar* 22, 1696

NORTHCOTE, Sir STAFFORD, *Exeter*
Payment of Members *Mar* 22, 1758

NORTON, Captain C. W., *Newington, W.*
Admiralty Department *Mar* 14, 1040
Drivers and Conductors' Licences *Mar* 14, 1039
London Carmen *Feb* 28, 12, 13
Poor Law Officers Superannuation Bill *Mar* 18, 1349
War Office Reform *Mar* 14, 1118

NORTON, Lord
Education Code—The, Notice of *Motion* *Mar* 21, 1521

O'BRIEN, Mr. W., *Cork*
Margarine *Mar* 19, 1369, 1370

O'CONNOR, Mr. A., *Donegal, E.*
Action against Irish Constables *Mar* 21, 1546
Distress in Donegal County *Mar* 11, 755, 756; *Mar* 18, 1260
Importation of Foreign Provisions *Mar* 11, 758
Infectious Diseases in the Derry Union *Feb* 28, 33
Irish Mail Service—The *Mar* 21, 1569
Irish National Teachers' Fund *Mar* 18, 1263
Labourers Acts (Ireland) *Feb* 28, 28
Labourers' Cottages (Ireland) *Mar* 7, 551; *Mar* 11, 766
Polling Places in County Donegal *Feb* 28, 32; *Mar* 4, 293
Seed Potatoes (Ireland) *Feb* 28, 30

O'CONNOR, Mr. JAMES, *Wicklow, W.*
Labourers' Plots *Mar* 5, 377
Lighthouse Expenditure *Mar* 21, 1560

Occupations of the People (England and Wales)
Return Ordered *Mar* 12, 869

O'KEEFFE, Mr. F. A., *Limerick City*
Swine Fever *Mar* 5, 380
Telegraph Service
Ireland *Feb* 28, 15
Promotion *Mar* 11, 776

OLDROYD, Mr. M., *Dewsbury*
Factories and Workshops Bill *Mar* 1, 193

ORANMORE AND BROWNE, Lord,
Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 7, 527

Ordnance Survey Department (see AGRICULTURE, BOARD OF)

Outdoor Relief (Ireland) Bill
c. Intro., Mr. J. Morley; Read 1° *Mar* 18, 1276
2R. Mr. J. Morley, Mr. T. H. Bolton *Mar* 22, 1748, 1749
For Questions see IRELAND

PAGET, Sir R. H., *Somerset, Wells*
Commissioners of Woods and Forests *Mar* 7, 562
Foreign Bounties *Mar* 21, 1569
Local Government Act 1894 *Mar* 11, 772

Parish Constables Act
Q. Mr. H. D. Greene; *A.* Sir W. Foster *Mar* 1, 154

Parish Councillors
Qs. Mr. Long; *As.* Sir R. T. Reid *Mar* 11, 784

Parliament

LORDS

Miscellaneous
Petitions—School Board Rate. Pres. *(Viscount Cross)* *Mar* 7, 525

Sat First
Mar 11—Lord Basing, after the death of his father

COMMONS

Business of the House and Public Business
Business of the Evening Sitting, *Qs.* Major Rasch, Mr. Tomlinson; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 15, 1153
Business of the House, Sir W. Harcourt *(Motion)*, 54, 56, 65, 66, 68, 73; Mr. J. Chamberlain, 56; Sir M. E. Hicks-Beach, 63, 65, 66, 68; Mr. Atherley Jones, 70; Mr. J. Redmond, 72, 73, 75; Mr. Paul, 75; Mr. Labouchere, 76; Mr. Elliot Lees, 78; Mr. S. T. Evans, 80; Sir J. Lubbock, 81 *(Division)*—*Feb* 28
Obs. Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 4, 294
Qs. Mr. S. Herbert, Mr. Hanbury; *As.* Mr. T. Ellis *Mar* 8, 740. *Qs.* Mr. A. J. Balfour; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 12, 893. *Q.* Mr. J. Lowther; *A.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 15, 1155. *Qs.* Mr. A. J. Balfour, Mr. J. Lowther, Mr. Hanbury; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 19, 1382
Course of Business, *Q.* Sir M. Hicks-Beach; *A.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 7, 572

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PARLIAMENT—Commons—cont.

Business of the House and Public Business—cont.
- *Government Business*, *Q.* Sir M. Hicks-Beach; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Feb* 28, 127
- *Ministers and Business of the House*, *Qs.* Sir H. S. King, Mr. Goschen, Mr. J. Chamberlain, Sir C. Dilke, Mr. Brodrick; *Obs.* Mr. J. G. Talbot; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 5, 391
- *Order of Business*, *Q.* Mr. Hanbury; *A.* Mr. T. Ellis *Mar* 7, 648
- *Presentation of Bills*, *Qs.* Captain Bethell, Sir A. K. Rollit; *As.* Mr. Speaker *Mar* 1, 165
- *Questions to Ministers*, *Q.* Sir J. Leng; *A.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 4, 288
- *Twelve o' Clock Rule (Motion)*, Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 19, 1384

Committees
- *Committee Nominations — (Motion)* Mr. T. Ellis *Mar* 4, 294
- *Public Accounts Committee—(Motion)* Sir J. T. Hibbert *Mar* 4, 294
- *Standing Committees*—Reported that Sir Julian Goldsmid was appointed Chairman of Standing Committee for consideration of Bills relating to Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures, and Sir G. O. Morgan for Bills relating to Law, Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure *Mar* 1, 206

Members
- *Accommodation for*, *Qs.* Mr. Cremer; *As.* Mr. Gladstone *Mar* 21, 1562
- *Payment of*, Mr. W. Allen *(Motion)* 1749, 1767, 1788; Mr. C. Fenwick, 1755, 1768; Sir Stafford Northcote, 1758; Mr. R. B. Haldane, 1762; Mr. C. J. Darling, 1766, 1767, 1768; Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 1768; Mr. J. W. Crombie, 1770; Mr. G. N. Curzon, 1773; Sir W. Harcourt, 1781; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 1785; (*Division*, 1788)—*Mar* 22

Miscellaneous
- *Alteration of Questions*, *Q.* Mr. Diamond; *A.* Mr. Speaker *Mar* 1, 165
- *Enclosure or Regulation of Commons* (*Motion* for Select Committee) *Mar* 15, 1142
- *Rules of Procedure*, *Qs.* Mr. Birkmyre; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 19, 1381
- *Withdrawal of Strangers during Divisions*, Mr. Byles *(Motion)*, 367, 368; Mr. H. Gladstone, 367, 368; Mr. S. Herbert, 367, 368 *Mar* 4

New Writ Issued
- *Mar* 13—*For* the Borough of Bristol (East Division), *v.* Sir Joseph Dodge Weston, Knight, deceased

Parliamentary Debates
- *Printing*, *Qs.* Mr. S. Woods, Mr. Dalziel; *As.* Sir J. T. Hibbert *Mar* 19, 1373

PAUL, Mr. H., *Edinburgh, S.*
- Business of the House *Feb* 28, 75
- Christians in Turkey *Mar* 7, 554
- Edinburgh Telegraphists *Mar* 21, 1567

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PAUL, Mr. H.—*cont.*
- Established Church (Wales) Bill *Mar* 21, 1655, 1657, 1660
- Shrinkage of the Markets and British Manufactures *Mar* 15, 1225, 1226, 1236

Payment of Members (see PARLIAMENT)

PEASE, Mr. J. A., *Northumberland, Tyneside*
- Consumption of Spirits in West Africa *Mar* 7, 540, 541
- Poor Law Officers Superanuation Bill *Mar* 18, 1350
- Supply—Slaye Trade in Zanzibar and Pemba *Mar* 8, 664, 666, 669, 676

PEASE, Sir J. W., *Durham, Barnard Castle*
- Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill *Mar* 5, 398

PENN, Mr. J., *Lewisham*
- Navy Estimates—Admiralty Administration *Mar* 11, 843
- Naval Manœuvres *Mar* 5, 372

Penalties under the Margarine Act, 1887 (see HOME DEPARTMENT)

Pensions
- *Crimean and Indian Mutiny*, *Qs.* Major Rasch, Sir J. Leng; *As.* Mr. Woodall *Mar.* 5, 385
- *Greenwich Age*, *Q.* Major Rasch; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 7, 532
- *India Military*, *Q.* General Goldsworthy; *A.* Sir E. Grey *Mar* 11, 760
- *Naval Age*, *Q.* Major Rasch; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 18, 1266
- *Teachers*, *Q.* Mr. A. Billson; *A.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 7, 563

Perjury Bill
- *l.* Intro., Lord Chancellor; Read 1ª *Feb* 28, 1
- 2R. Lord Herschell *(Moved)* *Mar* 11, 748
- Read 2ª *Mar* 11, 748
- Passed through Com. and Rep. without Amendment *Mar* 12, 858
- Read 3ª and passed, and sent to Commons *Mar* 14, 1025

PERKS, Mr. R. W., *Lincolnshire, Louth*
- Burials Bill 2R. *Mar* 6, 494

PICKERSGILL, Mr. E. H., *Bethnal Green, S.W.*
- Judicial Statistics *Mar* 12, 886
- Penalties under the Margarine Act, 1887 *Mar* 12, 885
- Post Office Uniforms *Mar* 21, 1552

PIERPOINT, Mr. R., *Warrington*
- Supply: Cyprus—Grant in Aid *Mar* 8, 698; *Mar* 19, 1387, 1390, 1391, 1401

Pistols Bill
Sir G. O. Morgan brought up Rep. of Grand Com. on Law *Mar* 19, 1360

PLAYFAIR, Lord (Lord in Waiting)
Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Bill, *Motion* for 3R. *Mar* 12, 857

Plumbers' Registration Bill
2R. Mr. L. Knowles, 739, 740; Mr. T. M. Healy, 739, 740—*Mar* 8

PLUNKET, Right Hon. D. R., *Dublin University*
Moffett—Case of Dr. *Feb* 28, 24, 25, 26

Police and Sanitary Regulations Committee (see LAW, JUSTICE, AND POLICE)

Poor Law Officers Superannuation Bill
2R. Mr. W. Long, 1349; Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Logan, Mr. Pease, Mr. Warner, Captain Norton, 1350—*Mar* 18

POST OFFICE
Postmaster General—Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY
Clerkships, *Q.* Mr. S. Hoare; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Feb* 28, 23
Delivery of Letters in Llanelidan, Denbigh, *Q.* Mr. Roberts; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 11, 757
Dublin Post Office Clerks, *Q.* Mr. Clancy; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 12, 889
Fairview Post Office, County Dublin, *Q.* Mr. Clancy; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 7, 555
Irish Mails, *Qs.* Captain Donelan, Mr. Wolff; *As.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 12, 890
Isle of Achill, *Q.* Mr. Macartney; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 19, 1369
London Letter Carriers, *Q.* Mr. Brookfield; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 1, 162
Mail Service (Ireland), *Qs.* Dr. Kenny, Mr. A. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 21, 1569
Money Order Post Cards, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 15, 1150
Mull Telegraph Cable, *Q.* Sir D. Macfarlane; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 19, 1372
Naval Reserve Fund—The Post Office, *Q.* Mr. Hayden; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 12, 870
New Zealand Post Office and Trades' Unions, *Q.* Mr. Howell; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 14, 1038
Norwich Post Office, *Q.* Mr. Price; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 4, 281
Parcel Post Baskets, *Q.* Mr. Austin; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Feb* 28, 22
Parcel Post Rates, *Q.* Mr. Hazell; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Feb* 28, 41; *Mar* 4, 277
Postal Orders, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 12, 884
Postal Rates, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 15, 1143
Postal Union Congress, *Q.* Mr. Loder; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 15, 1148

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POST OFFICE—cont.
Postmen's Holidays, *Q.* Mr. Long; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Feb* 28, 27
Private Post Cards, *Q.*, Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Sir J. T Hibbert *Mar* 5, 375
Savings Bank Deposits, *Q.* Sir H. Howorth; *A.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 15, 1154
Sheffield Telegraphists, *Q.* Mr. Stuart-Wortley; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 19, 1361
Skye Steamboat Service, *Q.* Dr. Macgregor; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 7, 557
Sligo Post Office, *Q.* Mr. P. M'Hugh; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 14, 1040
Sorters, *Q.* Mr. Keir Hardie; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 21, 1555
Suspension of a Postmaster (Ireland), *Q.* Mr. Mains; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 1, 159
Telegraph
  Facilities—County Wexford, *Q.* Mr. Ffrench; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 11, 769
  Service (Ireland), *Q.* Mr. O'Keeffe; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Feb* 28, 15
  Service Promotion, *Q.* Mr. O'Keeffe; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 11, 776
Telegraphic
  Code Words, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 15, 1147
  Money Orders, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 12, 883
Telegraphists—Edinburgh, *Q.* Mr. Paul; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 21, 1567
Telephone Service Committee, *Q.* Mr. A. C. Morton; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 21, 1570
Telephones, *Q.* Mr. H. S. Foster; *A.* Mr. A. Morley, *Feb* 28, 27
Uniforms, *Qs.* Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, Mr. W. Allen, Mr. W. Johnston; *As.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 21, 1552
Wages of Post Office Servants, *Q.* Mr. Keir Hardie; *A.* Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 11, 779

Post Office and National Telephone Company
(*Motion* for Select Committee), Mr. J. W. Benn, 207, 215, 218, 239; Captain Bagot, 211; Mr. A. Morley, 213, 215, 216, 218, 219, 233; Mr. Labouchere, 216, 232, 233; Mr. T. Lough, 219; Mr. A. C. Corbett, 222; Sir J. E. Gorst, 223; Sir J. Carmichael, 225, 229, 231; Sir C. Cameron, 227; Mr. G. J. Goschen, 228, 229, 231; Sir W. Harcourt, 234, 238, 239; Mr. Provand, 236; Mr. Moulton, 238; Mr. Morton, 239; Mr. H. S. Foster, 239—*Mar* 1
Ordered,—That a Select Com. be appointed *Mar* 1, 240

POWELL, Sir F. S., *Wigan*
Boards of Conciliation Bill *Mar* 7, 648
Established Church (Wales) Bill *Feb* 28, 88
Frost and School Attendance *Mar* 7, 537
New Code—The *Mar* 7, 538
New Code and Training Colleges *Mar* 12, 882
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Superintendence of Pupil Teachers *Mar* 12, 882
Supply
  Foreign Office *Mar* 5, 429
  Scotch Law Charges *Mar* 7, 620, 621, 626

POWER, Mr. P. J., *Waterford, E.*
Board of Guardians (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 13, 976
Public Health Officers in Ireland *Mar* 12, 876
Surveyors of Taxes *Mar* 1, 155, 156

PRICE, Mr. R. J., *Norfolk, East*
Norwich Post Office *Mar* 4, 281

PRICE, Mr. T. P., *Monmouth, N.*
Established Church (Wales) Bill *Mar* 21, 1627

PROVAND, Mr. A. D., *Glasgow, Blackfriars*
Local Taxation in Urban Districts *Mar* 8, 700, 736
Post Office and National Telephone Company *Mar* 1, 236

Public Health Acts Amendment Bill
c. Intro., Sir A. K. Rollit; Read 1° *Mar* 1, 167

Public Health Bill
c. Intro., Lord Stanley; Read 1° *Mar* 14, 1140

Questions—Alteration of
Q. Mr. Diamond; *A.* Mr. Speaker *Mar* 1, 165

Railways
Accidents to Railway Servants, *Q.* Mr. Channing; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 12, 889
Cork and Muskerry Light Railway, *Q.* Dr. Tanner; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Feb* 28, 50
Delagoa Bay Railway, *Q.* Mr. Henniker Heaton; *A.* Sir E. Grey *Mar* 1, 159
Irish Railway, *Q.* Mr. Hayden; *A.* Sir J. T. Hibbert *Mar* 21, 1548
Light Railways Committee, *Qs.* Mr. Channing; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 14, 1061
Railway Extension in Ireland, *Q.* Mr. Curran; *A.* Mr. J. Morley *Mar* 14, 1042
Return of Accidents, *Q.* Mr. Channing; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 12, 889
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Traders and Railway Rates, *Q.* Mr. Tomlinson; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 4, 291
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RASCH, Major F. C., *Essex, S.E.*
Army Supply (Indian Contribution—Debate) *Mar* 14, 1105
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Business of the Evening Sitting *Mar* 15, 1153
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RASCH, Major F. C.—*cont.*
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  Distress in Ireland—Relief of *Mar* 7, 608, 609
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3R. Mr. J. Lowther, [Mr. Speaker,] Mr. Tomlinson *Mar* 15, 1244

REAY, LORD (Under Secretary of State for India)
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REDMOND, Mr. J. E., *Waterford*
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REDMOND, Mr. W. H. K., *Clare, E.*
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  Clare County *Mar* 11, 754
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REED, Sir E. J., *Cardiff*
Navy Estimates
  Admiralty Administration *Mar* 11, 797
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REID, SIR R. T. (Attorney General) *Dumfries District of Burghs*
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  Law Charges (England) *Mar* 5, 441, 443, 446
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Religious Opinions (Prosecutions) Bill
c. Intro., Mr. Gourley; Read 1° *Mar* 1, 166

RENTOUL, Mr. J. A., *Down, E.*
Justices of the Peace Bill 2R. *Mar* 20, 1493
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RIBBLESDALE, LORD (Master of the Buckhounds)
Grand Juries (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill 2R. *Mar* 19, 1359
Richmond Lunatic Asylum, Dublin *Mar* 7, 528
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RICHARDSON Mr. J., *Durham, S.E.*
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RICHARDSON, Mr. J. M., *Lincoln, Brigg*
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Richmond Lunatic Asylum
Q. Lord Ashbourne; *A.* Lord Ribblesdale; *Obs.*, Earl of Erne *Mar* 7, 527

RIDLEY, Sir M. WHITE, *Lancashire, Blackpool*
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RIPON, MARQUESS OF (Secretary of State for the Colonies)
Australian Colonies Customs Duties Bill 2R. *Feb* 28, 2; *Mar* 19, 1357—In Com. *Mar* 21, 1534
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ROBERTS, Mr. J. H., *Denbighshire, W.*
Delivery of Letters in Llanelidan *Mar* 11, 757
Denbighshire County Council *Mar* 7, 533
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ROBERTSON, MR. EDMUND (Civil Lord of the Admiralty), *Dundee*
Accountant General's Department—The *Mar* 7, 551
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Baltic and North Sea Canal *Mar* 11, 774
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"*Britannia*"—The Training Ship *Mar* 18, 1273, 1274
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"*Hornet*"—H.M.S. *Mar* 21, 1573
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  Admiralty Administration *Mar* 11, 811, 812, 848, 849, 851
  88,850 Men and Boys *Mar* 12, 894, 898, 910, 912, 922, 953, 967

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ROBERTSON, Mr. EDMUND—*cont.*
Navy Estimates—*cont.*
  £4,133,500 for Wages *Mar* 18, 1282, 1283, 1284, 1285, 1306, 1336, 1338, 1341, 1345, 1347
  Supplementary Estimates, 1894-95—£200,000 for Materials, &c. *Mar* 18, 1348
"*Northampton*"—The Training Ship *Mar* 21, 1559
Ocean Derelicts *Mar* 21, 1563
Second-class Battleships *Mar* 11, 761
Supply—Naval Expenditure *Mar* 19, 1442
"*Tamar*"—The Troopship *Mar* 19, 1379
Teak for Her Majesty's Ships *Mar* 22, 1684
Torpedo Catchers *Mar* 11, 763

ROBINSON, Sir T., *Gloucester*
Illegal Marking of Goods *Mar* 12, 886
Unemployed in Gloucester *Feb* 28, 39

ROBY, Mr. HENRY JOHN, *Lancashire, S.E., Eccles*
(Rulings as Chairman of Committees)
  Scotch Law Charges
    The hon. Member was requested to confine himself to the question before the Committee *Mar* 7, 627
    The hon. and learned Member need not assume that imputations have been made, and that he had better confine himself to the question *Mar* 7, 630
  Public Education in England and Wales
    The hon. Member must confine himself to annual grants for the day schools and day scholars. The general policy and administration of the Department will not come under the Vote *Mar* 7, 638
    The hon. Member was going into questions beyond the Vote, and the policy and administration were not under discussion. The Supplementary Estimate was due to an under estimate of average attendance and of the rate of grant payable thereon *Mar* 7, 639
    The hon. Member was requested not to continue that line of argument *Mar* 7, 640
    The question is that Progress be reported *Mar* 7, 641
    The Chairman thought there was a broad distinction between an Ordinary and a Supplementary Estimate. As a rule, unless a Supplementary Estimate was of an extraordinary or extravagant character, the general discussion of policy should be confined to the first and main Vote. The present Supplementary Estimate was not of such a character, and accordingly it seemed to him a general discussion of policy would be entirely out of Order *Mar* 7, 643
    The Chairman said that if the right hon. Gentleman would proceed with his argument on the subject, he would endeavour to put him right if he exceeded the ruling he had given. But declined to give any further explanation *Mar* 7, 644

ROCHE, Mr. J., *Galway, E.*
Distress in Galway *Mar* 14, 1032

ROLLIT, Sir A. K., *Islington, S.*
Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill *Mar* 5, 414
Justices of the Peace Bill 2R. *Mar* 20, 1509
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Metropolitan District Railway Bill 2R. *Mar* 4, 267
Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 20, 1466
Pleuro-pneumonia in London *Mar* 14, 1058
Presentation of Bills *Mar* 1, 166
Rule of the Road at Sea—Debate on *Motion* for Select Com. *Mar* 20, 1520
Supply
  London University *Mar* 8, 657, 659, 663
  Miscellaneous Legal Expenses *Mar* 7, 593

ROSCOE, Sir H., *Manchester, S.*
Universities (Scotland) Act *Feb* 28, 142

ROTHSCHILD, Baron F. J. DE, *Bucks, Aylesbury*
Aldershot Camp *Mar* 18, 1273

ROUND, Mr. J., *Essex, Harwich*
Supply: Temporary Commissions—Historical Manuscripts *Mar* 19, 1417

ROUNDELL, Mr. C., *York W.R., Skipton*
Aged Poor Commission—The *Mar* 12, 876

ROWLANDS, Mr. J., *Finsbury, E.*
Industrial and Provident Societies (Purchase of Fee Simple) Bill—Notice of 2R. *Mar* 20, 1517
Local Taxation in Urban Districts *Mar* 8, 715
South Metropolitan Gas Bill 2R. *Mar* 1, 145, 154

Rule of the Road at Sea
(Amendt. on Motion for Select Com.) Sir D. Currie, 522; Mr. Bowles, 522; Mr. Bryce, 522—*Mar* 6
(Adj. Debate on Amendt.) Sir D. Currie, 1022, 1023; Mr. Bowles, 1022, 1023; Mr. Bryce, 1022; Mr. Mundella, 1023; [Mr. Speaker, 1023]—*Mar* 13
(Debate on Sir D. Currie's Motion) Mr. T. G. Bowles, 1518, 1519, 1520; Mr. Bryce, 1519; [Mr. Speaker, 1519;] Mr. S. Williams, 1519; Mr. Cayzer, 1520; Sir A. K. Rollit, 1520; Mr. A. J. Mundella, 1520—*Mar* 20. Mr. T. G. Bowles, Mr. Bryce, [Mr. Speaker,] Mr. Bartley, 1664—*Mar* 21

RUSSELL, MR. G. W. E. (Under Secretary of State for the Home Department), *North Beds*
Allotments *Mar* 4, 276
Attendance in Irish Schools *Mar* 4, 291
Checkweighman's Act—The (1894) *Mar* 21, 1538

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RUSSELL, Mr. G. W. E.—*cont.*
Church of All Hallows *Mar* 18, 1262
Colonel Mitchell's Claims *Mar* 18, 1257
Dead Bodies from the Sea *Mar* 21, 1556
Distress in
  Ballina Union *Mar* 4, 283
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Eviction Notices in Cavan *Mar* 4, 290
Expedition to Chitral—The *Mar* 21, 1549
Hemp Drugs Commission—The *Mar* 21, 1557
Irish Registration of Titles Office *Mar* 4, 276
Malabar Marriage System *Mar* 21, 1556
Police and Sanitary Regulation Committee *Mar* 12, 862, 867
Polling Places in Donegal County *Mar* 4, 293
Racing Dispute in Madras—A *Mar* 21, 1566
Shrievalty of County Kilkenny—The *Mar* 4, 280
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RUSSELL, Mr. T. W., *Tyrone, S.*
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St. Andrews University
Reply from Her Majesty brought up by the Marquess of Breadalbane *Mar* 7, 525

St. James's Park Ornamental Water
Qs. Mr. P. Thornton; *As.* Mr. H. Gladstone *Mar* 22, 1692

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors Bill
c. Intro., Mr. Courtney; Read 1° *Mar* 12, 894

SALISBURY, Marquess of
Australian Colonies Customs Duties Bill *Feb* 28, 3
Cyprus—Revenues of *Mar* 15, 1141

Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill
c. Intro., Mr. Seton-Karr; Read 1° *Mar* 1, 166

SANDYS, Colonel T. M., *Lancashire, S.W., Bootle*
Seed Potatoes (Ireland) *Mar* 12, 872

SAUNDERSON, Colonel E. J., *Armagh, N.*
Board of Guardians (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 13, 1001, 1003, 1006, 1013
Land Bill (Ireland) *Mar* 4, 355, 356, 358

School Board Rate
Petition Pres. *(Viscount Cross)* *Mar* 7, 525

Schwann, Mr. C. E., *Manchester, N.*
Armenian
  Commission *Mar* 14, 1046
  Ecclesiastics *Mar* 22, 1687
  Intimidation of Witnesses *Mar* 18, 1270
  Outrages *Mar* 21, 1562, 1563
Education Department and Voluntary Schools *Mar* 18, 1269

Scoble, Sir A. R., *Hackney, Central*
Sir John Cass's Charity *Mar* 18, 1350, 1353

Scotch and Irish Cattle Regulations (see Agriculture, Board of)

SCOTLAND
Afforestation in the Highlands, Q. Dr. Macgregor; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 12, 881
Alteration of Scottish Boundaries, Obs. Lord Balfour, 742; Lord Tweedmouth, 743 *Mar* 11
Beam Trawling, Q. Dr. Macgregor; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 14, 1039
Campbeltown School Board, Q. Mr. A. Cross; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 7, 560
Cottars in Lewis, Q. Mr. J. G. Weir; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1557
County Council Loans, Q. Mr. Jacks; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 11, 768
Crofters Act, Qs. Sir D. Macfarlane, Dr. D. Macgregor; *As.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 11, 771
Crofters' Commission, Q. Mr. J. M'Leod; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 12, 887
Crofters' Dog Licences, Qs. Sir D. Macfarlane; *As.* Sir J. T. Hibbert *Feb* 28, 11
Dalmeny and South Queensferry, Q. Captain Hope; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 12, 884
Day and Evening School, Q. Sir D. Macfarlane; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 1, 164
Distribution of Parish Councillors, Qs. Lord Balfour; *As.* Lord Tweedmouth *Mar* 11, 744
Education Code, Q. Mr. Parker Smith; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Feb* 28, 35
Erbusaig, Ross-shire, Q. Mr. Weir; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1559
Falls of Foyers, Qs. Mr. Morton, Dr. Macgregor; *As.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 7, 542. *Qs.* Mr. Morton, Dr. Macgregor; *As.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 22, 1688
Feus and Leases, Q. Dr. Macgregor; *A.* Mr. J. B. Balfour *Mar* 5, 385. *Q.* Mr. Seymour Keay; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 7, 567
Fife County Boundaries, Qs. Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Dalziel; *As.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 11, 753
Fishery Board, Q. Mr. Buchanan; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1545
Fishing Harbours, Q. Sir L. Lyell; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1541
Grants to Parish Schools, Q. Mr. Caldwell; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 7, 545
Higher Education, Q. Mr. Crombie; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1541
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SCOTLAND—cont.
Highland Land Bill, Qs. Dr. Macgregor; *As.* Mr. J. B. Balfour *Mar* 5, 382
Home Rule for, Qs. Dr. Macgregor; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 5, 391
Kilninan and Kilmore, Q. Sir D. Macfarlane; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 14, 1057
Legislation, Q. Mr. Caldwell; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 14, 1037
Lighting of the Scotch Coasts, Q. Mr. Weir; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 19, 1375
Mines Inspection, Q. Mr. Hozier; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 7, 552
Orkney and Shetland Lights, Q. Mr. Shaw-Stewart; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 7, 567
Parish Council Elections, Qs. Sir M. Stewart, Mr. J. Dalziel; *As.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1560
Private Bills Procedure, Q. Mr. W. Thorburn; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Feb* 28, 20
Roads in the Hebrides, Q. Dr. Macgregor; *A.* Mr. J. B. Balfour *Mar* 5, 384
Salmon Fisheries, Q. Dr. Macgregor; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 12, 881
Shepherds' Children and School Attendance, Q. Sir M. Stewart; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1560
Standing Committee, Qs. Sir C. Cameron, Sir H. Maxwell, Mr. Parker-Smith; *As.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Feb* 28, 21
Steam Trawling in the Highlands, Q. Sir D. Macfarlane; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 19, 1371
Teachers' Superannuation, Q. Mr. Buchanan; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 7, 550
Trawling, Q. Mr. Buchanan; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 4, 286
Trawling—Alleged Illegal, Q. Dr. Macgregor; *A.* Mr. J. B. Balfour *Mar* 5, 384
Tweed and Solway Fisheries, Qs. Mr. Maxwell; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 11, 770
Tweed Fisheries Acts, Qs. Mr. H. J. Tennant, Mr. R. A. Allison, Mr. F. Napier, Sir D. Macfarlane; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 5, 379. *Q.* Mr. Napier; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 12, 873
Village of St. Ninians, Q. Sir H. Maxwell; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 7, 561
Voters' Grievance, Q. Sir W. Wedderburn; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1549
Western Highlands and Islands, Qs. Mr. Weir; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt, Sir J. T. Hibbert *Mar* 19, 1374
Western Highlands and Islands Works Acts, Qs. Mr. Weir, Dr. Macgregor; *As.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Mar* 21, 1558
West Highland Railway Company (see Railways)

Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Bill
2R. Lord Tweedmouth, 242, 249, 251, 252, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261; Marquess of Huntly, 248, 249, 251, 260; Marquess of Lothian, 250, 251, 252, 257, 258; Earl of Camperdown, 253, 257; Lord Balfour, 258, 260—*Mar* 4
Read 2a and referred to Select Com. *Mar* 4, 261
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Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill
2R. Earl of Camperdown, 261, 262, 263, 264; Lord Tweedmouth, 262, 263, 264; Earl of Galloway, 264; Marquess of Lothian, 264—*Mar* 4
Read 2ª and referred to Select Com. *Mar* 4, 264

Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Bill
Considered in Com., Com. R. P.; *Obs.* Mr. T. Sexton, 127, 128, 129; Mr. J. Morley, 128; Sir M. Hicks-Beach, 129—*Feb* 28
Con. in Com. and Rep. without Amendt. *Mar* 1, 206
c. Read 3° and passed *Mar* 1, 206
l. Read 1ª *Mar* 4, 265
2R. Lord Ribblesdale, 525, 527; Lord Ashbourne, 526, 527; Lord Oranmore and Brown, 527, *Mar* 7
Read 2ª *Mar* 7, 527
On *Motion* for Com., Lord Ribblesdale *Mar* 11, 741
Passed through Com. and Rep. without Amendts. *Mar* 11, 741
Read 3ª and passed *Mar* 12, 857
Royal Assent *Mar* 14, 1025

Seton-Karr, Mr. H., *St. Helens*
Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill *Mar* 5, 413
Sale of Domains in Egypt *Mar* 12, 873, 874
Shrinkage of the Markets and British Manufactures *Mar* 15, 1220, 1223

Sexton, Mr. T., *Kerry, N.*
Christian Brothers—The *Mar* 5, 385
Land Bill (Ireland) *Mar* 4, 317
Moffett—Case of Dr. *Feb* 28, 26
National Board of Education (Ireland) *Mar* 1, 163
Relief Works in Ireland *Mar* 22, 1695
Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Bill *Feb* 28, 127, 128, 129
Supply: Distress in Ireland—Relief of *Mar* 7, 615

Shannon Navigation
Q. Mr. Tully; *A.* Sir J. T. Hibbert *Mar* 19, 1361

Shaw-Stewart, Mr. M. H., *Renfrew, E.*
Orkney and Shetland Lights *Mar* 7, 567
Supply—Scotch Law Charges *Mar* 7, 626

Sheehy, Mr. D., *Galway, S.*
Distress in
  Galway *Mar* 14, 1028
  Loughrea Union *Mar* 12, 883
Kilronan Pier, Arran Island *Mar* 14, 1028
Registers of Voters in Ireland *Feb* 28, 46
Voters' Lists in
  County Cork—Sale of *Mar* 14, 1026
  Ireland *Mar* 4, 278

Shop Hours Act Amendment Bill
c. Intro., Mr. Provand; Read 1° *Feb* 28, 144
2R. Mr. Asquith *Mar* 14, 1139
2R. deferred *Mar* 14, 1140

Shop Hours Bill
c. Intro., Mr. G. Russell; Read 1° *Mar* 7, 648
In Com. Mr. Bromley Davenport, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Bartley *Mar* 15, 1209, 1210
Rep. without Amendts. Read 3° and passed *Mar* 15, 1210

Shops (Early Closing) Bill
Select Com. nominated *Mar* 1, 240

Shrinkage of the Markets and British Manufactures
Colonel C. E. Howard Vincent *(Motion)*, 1210, 1237, 1239; Mr. H. Seton-Karr, 1220, 1223; Sir F. Evans, 1222; Mr. Paul, 1225, 1226, 1236; Mr. J. Lowther, 1226, 1235, 1237, 1238, 1239; Mr. F. G. Banbury, 1226; Sir H. Howorth, 1229; Mr. R. J. D. Burnie, 1233; Sir W. Harcourt, 1238; Mr. Mundella, 1238; Mr. J. Bryce, 1238, 1239 (*Division*, 1243)—*Mar* 15

Sidebotham, Mr. J. W., *Cheshire, Hyde*
Burials Bill 2R. *Mar* 6, 500

Smaller Dwellings (Scotland) Bill
c. Intro., Mr. A. Cross; Read 1° *Mar* 6, 524

Small Tenants (Scotland) Bill
c. Intro., Captain Sinclair; Read 1° *Mar* 12, 894

Smith, Hon. W. F. Danvers, *Strand, Westminster*
Dead Bodies from the Sea *Mar* 21, 1556

Smith, Mr. J. Parker-, *Lanarkshire, Partick*
Education Code *Feb* 28, 35
Glasgow Corporation and Police Bill *(Motion)* *Mar* 1, 272
Mala Real Portugueza Company *Feb* 28, 18
Scotch Standing Committee *Feb* 28, 21

Smith, Mr. S., *Flintshire*
Army Supply (Indian Contribution—Debate) *Mar* 14, 1101
Disorderly Houses *Mar* 14, 1034

Snape, Mr. T., *Lancashire, S.E., Heywood*
Excise and Customs Duties in India *Mar* 19, 1361
Marylebone Western National School *Mar* 1, 160
Navy Estimates—£4,133,500 for Wages *Mar* 18, 1332
St. Mark's National Schools, Finsbury *Mar* 5, 387
Supply: Temporary Commissions—Secondary Education *Mar* 19, 1427

Solicitors (Ireland) Bill
l. 2R. Lord Macnaghten *(Motion)* 369; Lord Ashbourne, 370; Lord Herschell, 370—*Mar* 5
Read 2ª *Mar* 5, 370

South Metropolitan Gas Bill
2R. Mr. J. Rowlands, 145, 154; Mr. Banbury, 147; Mr. Howell, 149; Mr. H. Kimber, 151; Mr. Bryce, 152—*Mar* 1
Read 2° *Mar* 1, 154

Southwark and Vauxhall Water (Transfer) Bill
Mr. J. Stuart *(Motion) Mar* 7, 530

SPEAKER—MR. (THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR WELLESLEY PEEL), *Warwick and Leamington*

Questions
Question before the House was, whether the Second Reading of this Bill should be deferred or now taken *Feb* 28, 5
In nearly all cases, where a question handed to the clerks at the table is irregular, immediate notice is given to the hon. Member *Mar* 1, 165
If the House should wish it, care would be taken not to allow Ministers to curtail their journeys to and from the Bar *Mar* 1, 166
There being no truth in the rumour referred to, an hon Member is hardly justified in putting further questions *Mar* 7, 572
The hon. Member had better omit that part of the question which presumes that barbarous outrages have been committed *Mar* 21, 1562

Rules and Order of Debate
Seeing that the Motion to refer the Bill to a Standing Committee had been made without notice, or had been discussed for so short a time, the Closure Motion ought not to be put *Mar* 13, 1021
Reminded the House that on the 11th of March the order for resuming the adjourned Debate on the Question that the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Law had been read and discharged, and that consequently the Bill was now in the position of a Bill which had been read a second time without any Motion being made to refer it to a Standing or Select Committee. He had, therefore, to call upon the hon. Member in charge of the Bill to fix a day for Committee *Mar* 14, 1140
Order being for the resumption of the Debate on the Motion for committing the Bill to a Standing Committee, a motion to withdraw the Bill could not then be entertained *Mar* 15, 1244
The hon. Member had already exhausted his rights of Speech on the Motion *Mar* 21, 1664

Miscellaneous Rulings
Feb 28, 5; *Mar* 8, 650; *Mar* 11, 772; *Mar* 13, 1006, 1017, 1023; *Mar* 15, 1244; *Mar* 18, 1276; *Mar* 20, 1483, 1517, 1519; *Mar* 21, 1563

SPENCER, RIGHT HON. C. R. (Vice Chamberlain), *Mid Northants*
Jarvis Charity—Brought up Her Majesty's Reply to Address *Mar* 8, 649

SPENCER, EARL (First Lord of the Admiralty
Manning of the Navy *Mar* 22, 1675

SPICER, Mr. A., *Monmouth*
Established Church (Wales) Bill *Mar* 21, 1630
Supply—£136,189 for Public Education in England and Wales *Mar* 7, 632

STANHOPE, Hon. P. J., *Burnley*
Army Supply (Indian Contribution—Debate) *Mar* 14, 1100

STANLEY, Lord, *Lancashire, S.E., Westhoughton*
Barrack Inspection *Mar* 12, 883
Field Army Equipment *Mar* 22, 1685
War Office Reform *Mar* 14, 1110, 1111

Stannaries Bill
c. Intro., Lord Chancellor, Read 1ª *Mar* 19, 1359

Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills
Motion for Com., Lord Herschell *Mar* 22, 1683
Com. Nominated and Message sent to House of Commons *Mar* 22, 1683

Statute Law Revision Bill
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STEVENSON, Mr. F. S., *Suffolk, Eye*
Armenia
  Ecclesiastics *Mar* 22, 1687
  Inquiry *Feb* 28, 36
  Journey from Moush to Kars *Mar* 7, 553
Lancashire Endowed Charities *Mar* 21, 1551
Supply: Cyprus—Grant in Aid *Mar* 8, 694

STEWART, Sir M., *Kirkcudbrightshire*
Parish Council Elections in Scotland *Mar* 21, 1560, 1561
Shepherds' Children and School Attendance *Mar* 21, 1560
Supply: Temporary Commissions—Secondary Education *Mar* 19, 1433

STUART, Mr. J., *Shoreditch, Hoxton*
Chelsea Water (Transfer) Bill 2R. *Feb* 28 5, 6
Contributions of Local Taxation *Mar* 18, 1269
Lambeth Water (Transfer) Bill *Feb* 28, 7, 8; *Mar* 4, 268, 270, 272; *Mar* 7, 529, 530
London and Provincial Rates *Mar* 14, 1042
Southwark and Vauxhall Water (Transfer) Bill *Mar* 7, 530

SULLIVAN, Mr. T. D., *Donegal, W.*
Distress in Donegal *Mar* 1, 157; *Mar* 19, 1363
Imported Meat *Mar* 7, 535
Vaccinating School Children *Mar* 21, 1542

Sunday Bill
l. Intro., Lord Hobhouse; Read 1ª *Mar* 4, 241
2R. Lord Hobhouse, 1523, 1533; Archbishop of Canterbury, 1530; Viscount Cross, 1533 *Mar* 21

SUPPLY
ORDER FOR COMMITTEE READ *Mar* 1, 207
Army and Navy Estimates (see under those titles)

CIVIL SERVICE—SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

£14,000—*Houses of Parliament*
Com.—*Obs.* Mr. T. W. Legh, 415; Mr. W. Johnston, 416; Mr. H. J. Gladstone, 416, 417, 420, 425; Sir R. Temple, 416, 417, 421; Mr. H. T. Knatchbull-Hugessen, 417; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 417, 424; Colonel C. E. Howard Vincent, 417, 418, 420; Mr. W. Crosfield, 418; Major Darwin, 418; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 418, 422; Mr. J. W. Lowther, 419; Sir R. Webster, 419; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 419, 421; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 421, 423; Captain Bethell, 422; Mr. W. L. Jackson, 423; Dr. C. K. Tanner 423, 424; Mr. A. C. Morton 424; Mr. S. Herbert, 425 *(Division* 425*)*—*Mar* 5. Report *Mar* 6, 523

£7,300—*Foreign Office*
Com., Mr. J. W. Lowther, 425; Sir E. Grey, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 426, 428, 430; Mr. T. W. Legh, 426; Mr. R. W. Hanbury 426, 428, 430; Colonel Lockwood, 428; Mr. H. S. Foster, 428, 430; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 429; Sir R. Temple, 429, 430; Sir F. S. Powell, 429; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 430; Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, 430. Vote agreed to, *Mar* 5. Report *Mar* 6, 523

£1,500—*Colonial Office*
Com., Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 430; Mr. S. Buxton, 431; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 431. Vote agreed to, *Mar* 5. Report *Mar* 6, 523

£2,500—*Mercantile Marine Fund*
Com., Sir E. Clarke, 431, 433; Mr. A. C. Morton *(Amendt.)* 431, 432, *(Amendt. withdrawn)* 433; Mr. J. Bryce, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 433, 434, 436; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 433, 434, 436. Vote agreed to, *Mar* 5. Report *Mar* 6, 523

£496—*Local Government Board, Scotland*
Com.—*Qs. and Obs.*, Dr. G. B. Clark, 436, 438; Sir G. O. Trevelyan, 436, 437, 438; Mr. J. Caldwell, 437; Mr. H. T. Anstruther, 437; Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 437, 438. Vote agreed to, *Mar* 5. Report *Mar* 6, 523

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£16,570—*Law Charges, England*
Com.—*Obs.* Sir E. Clarke, 438, 443; Mr. C. J. S. Dodd, 440; Sir R. T. Reid, 441, 443, 446; Mr. C. J. Darling, 444, 446. Vote agreed to, *Mar* 5. Report *Mar* 6, 523

£7,000—*Miscellaneous Legal Expenses*
Dr. Herz
Com., Sir E. J. Reed, 446, 451, 453; Sir F. Lockwood, 451; Sir E. Clarke, 452; Mr. J. W. Lowther, 453; Colonel C. E. Howard Vincent, 454; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 454—*Mar* 5. Report *Mar* 6, 523
Extradition of Jabez Balfour
Com., Mr. C. J. Darling, 454, 456; Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, 456, 464; Sir E. Grey, 456, 460, 461, 466, 467, 468; Mr. B. L. Cohen, 460; Mr. W. R. Cremer, 461, 463; Colonel C. E. Howard Vincent, 462; Sir R. T. Reid, 463, 464, 465; Mr. T. T. Bucknill, 466; Mr. C. B. Stuart-Wortley, 467, 468 (*Debate Adj.* 468)—*Mar* 5
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Com., Mr. C. B. Stuart-Wortley, 573, 574, 575; Sir R. T. Reid, 574, 577, 581; Sir E. Grey, 574, 581, 582, 584, 590, 593, 596, 597, 599, 600; Mr. Jesse Collings, 576; Sir R. Temple, 579; Sir R. Webster, 580, 581, 597; Mr. J. Chamberlain, 582, 583, 584, 596; Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 582, 589; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 586, 590, 597; Mr. H. Labouchere, 588, 589; Mr. J. Lowther, 591, 593, 597, 598; Sir D. Macfarlane, 592; Colonel C. E. Howard Vincent, 592; Sir A. K. Rollit, 593; Mr. C. J. Darling *(Motion for Reduction)*, 593 *(Division* 594*)*; Mr. H. S. Foster, 594, 600; Sir W. Harcourt, 594; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 595, 599, 600; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 595, 600; Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, 595; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 596; Major L. Darwin, 598; Mr. Vicary Gibbs, 598, 599 *(Amendt.)*, 600; Mr. P. A. Muntz, 599 *(Division* 601*)*. Vote agreed to, *Mar* 7. Report *Mar* 8, 699

£35,000—*Distress in Ireland: Relief of*
Com., Sir J. T. Hibbert, 601, 602, 603, 607, 612, 613; Mr. E. Carson, 601, 604 *(Amendt.)*; Mr. J. Lowther, 602; Viscount Cranborne, 602; Mr. C. B. Stuart-Wortley, 603; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 603, 609; Sir R. Temple, 603; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 604, 610; Mr. T. M. Healy, 606; (*Amendt. negatived*, 608;) Major Rasch, 608, 609; Mr. G. Whiteley, 611, 612; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 613; Mr. J. A. Chamberlain, 614; Mr. W. Johnston, 614; Sir J. Leng, 615; Mr. T. Sexton, 615. Vote agreed to, *Mar* 7. Report *Mar* 8, 699

£10—*County Courts*
Com., Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 616, 617, 619; Mr. C. J. S. Dodd, 617; Sir R. Temple, 617; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 617, 618; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 618, 619; Mr. A. C. Morton, 619. Vote agreed to, 619—*Mar* 7. Report *Mar* 8, 699

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SUPPLY—cont.

£5,125—*Scotch Law Charges*
Com., Mr. F. S. Powell, 620, 621, 626; Mr. W. Bromley Davenport, 620; Sir W. Harcourt, 620; Mr. J. Lowther, 620, 622, 623; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 620, 621; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 621, 625; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 621; Mr. J. B. Balfour, 621; Mr. A. C. Morton, 621; Sir G. O. Trevelyan, 621; Mr. T. C. T. Warner, 623; Mr. R. W. Hanbury *(Amendt.)* 623, 625, 630; Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 624; Sir H. Maxwell, 625; Sir E. Clarke, 626, 629, 630; Mr. M. H. Shaw-Stewart, 626; Mr. C. J. S. Dodd, 626; Sir J. Joicey, 627; Mr. J. Burns, 628, 629; Mr. H. S. Foster, 628; Mr. H. T. Anstruther, 630 *(Amendt. withdrawn*, 631*)*. Vote agreed to *Mar* 7. Report *Mar* 8, 699

£500—*General Register House, Edinburgh*
Obs., Mr. Dalziel, Sir G. O. Trevelyan. Vote Agreed to 631, *Mar* 7. Report *Mar* 8, 699

£136,189—*Public Education in England and Wales*
Com., Mr. C. J. S. Dodd *(Amendt.)*, 631, 637, *(Amendt. withdrawn)* 638; Mr. A. Spicer, 632; Viscount Cranborne, 633, 635, 636, 642, 644; Mr. A. H. D. Acland, 634, 642; Mr. J. C. Williams, 635; Mr. Vicary Gibbs, 635; Mr. H. S. Foster, 636, 638 *(Amendt.)*, 639, 640; Sir W. Hart Dyke, 637, 643 *(Motion made to Report Progress*, 641*)*; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 641; Mr. W. P. Byles, 641; Mr. C. Diamond, 643; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 643 *(Division* 644*)*; Sir J. Gorst, 644. Report to House, 646—*Mar* 7
Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 650; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 651, 653; Mr. T. M. Healy, 651; Mr. A. H. D. Acland, 651, 652, 653, 654, 656, 657; Viscount Cranborne, 652, 656; Sir R. Temple, 652, 653, 656; Mr. W. Wickham, 656; Mr. W. E. M. Tomlinson, 656; Mr. J. Lowther, 657; Mr. H. S. Foster, 657. Vote agreed to *Mar* 8. Report *Mar* 11, 852

£10—*London University*
Com., Sir A. K. Rollit (*Amendt.*), 657, 659, 663; Sir W. Harcourt, 659, 663; Sir J. Goldsmid, 660, 662, 663; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 662; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 662; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 662; Mr. W. P. Byles, 663 *(Amendment withdrawn)*. Vote agreed to, *Mar* 8. Report *Mar* 11, 852

£500—*Slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba*
Com., Mr. J. A. Pease *(Amendt.)* 664, 666, 669, 676; Sir E. Grey, 667, 669, 672, 681; Captain Bethell, 670; Sir R. Temple, 671; Sir C. Dilke, 672, 673; Mr. J. W. Lowther, 673, 674; Mr. H. Labouchere, 673, 679; Colonel Lockwood, 674; Mr. J. Chamberlain, 674, 678; Sir J. Fergusson, 677; Sir W. Harcourt, 678; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 679; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 680;

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SUPPLY—cont.

£500—*Slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba*—cont.
Mr. J. H. Dalziel, 681; Mr. T. Bayley 682; Mr. J. Howard, 682; Sir J. M. Carmichael, 682 *(Division*, 683). Vote agreed to *Mar* 8. Report *Mar* 11, 852

£29,000—*Cyprus: Grant in Aid*
Com., Sir C. Dilke, 683, 690; Sir W. Harcourt, 686, 690, 693, 697; Mr. J. W. Lowther, 690; Sir J. Lubbock, 692; Sir G. Baden-Powell, 693; Mr. F. S. Stevenson, 694; Sir R. Temple, 694; Mr. W. Allen, 695; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 697; Mr. C. Bill, 697; Mr. R. Pierpoint, 698. Report to House, 698—*Mar* 8. Report *Mar* 11, 852

£90—*National Portrait Gallery*
Com., Mr. G. Loder, 1440; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 1440; Mr. W. E. M. Tomlinson, 1440. Vote agreed to *Mar* 19

£8,500—*For the Salaries and Expenses of the Inland Revenue Department*
Com., Mr. T. G. Bowles, 1438, 1439; Sir W. Harcourt, 1438, 1439; Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 1439; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 1439. Vote agreed to *Mar* 19

£14,000—*Temporary Commissions*
Secondary Education
Com., Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, 1419, 1420, 1421, 1425, 1434; Mr. A. H. D. Acland, 1420, 1421, 1422; Mr. J. Bryce, 1424, 1425, 1429; Mr. R. L. Everett, 1425; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 1425, 1437; Mr. T. Snape, 1427; Mr. W. E. M. Tomlinson, 1428, 1435; Admiral Field, 1428, 1431; Mr. T. G. Bowles, 1430; Mr. J. W. Lowther (as Chairman), 1431, 1436, 1437; Mr. A. B. Forwood, 1431; Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, 1432, 1435; Mr. B. L. Cohen, 1433; Sir M. Stewart, 1433; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 1434, 1435; Mr. W. S. Caine, 1434; Colonel Lockwood, 1435; Sir R. Temple, 1436, *(Amendt.)* 1437; Mr. R. G. Webster, 1437 *(Division)*, 1438. Vote agreed to *Mar* 19

Historical Manuscripts
Com., Sir R. Temple, 1416; Sir J. T. Hibbert, 1416; Major Rasch *(Amendt.)*, 1416, 1419; Colonel Lockwood, 1416; Mr. H. Gardner, 1417; Mr. J. Round, 1417; Mr. W. Long, 1417, 1418; Mr. R. W. Hanbury, 1418; Mr. H. T. Knatchbull-Hugessen, 1418; Mr. R. L. Everett, 1418 *(Division*, 1419*)* *Mar* 19

Swaziland (see AFRICA)

SWEETMAN, Mr. J., *Wicklow, E.*
Wicklow Harbour—Pier of *Feb* 28, 31

TALBOT, Mr. J. G., *Oxford University*
Church Endowments in Wales *Mar* 7, 558
Deaths from Starvation *Mar* 12, 876
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Talbot, Mr. J. G.—*cont.*
  Military Works *Mar* 7, 556
  Ministers and the Business of the House *Mar* 5, 392
  Royal Engineer Officers *Mar* 7, 556

Tanner, Dr. C. K. D., *Mid Cork Co.*
  Ballincollig Barracks, Cork County *Mar* 11, 769
  Board of Guardians (Ireland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 13, 1007
  Cork and Muskerry Light Railway *Feb* 28, 50
  Royal Engineer Inspection Division, Woolwich *Mar* 11, 778
  Supply—Houses of Parliament *Mar* 5, 423, 424

Taylor, Mr. F., *Suffolk, N.*
  Finance Act (1894)—The *Mar* 14, 1062

Telephone Service
  Motion for Com., Mr. T. Ellis, Mr. Morton, Mr. A. Morley *Mar* 13, 1023, 1024
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Temple, Sir R., *Surrey, Kingston*
  Army Supply (Indian Contribution—Debate) *Mar* 14, 1089, 1092
  Established Church (Wales) Bill *Mar* 21, 1662; *Mar* 22, 1699, 1705
  Factories and Workshops Bill *Mar* 1, 204
  Kew Garden Employés *Mar* 1, 159
  Navy Estimates
    Admiralty Administration *Mar* 11, 815, 817
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    County Courts *Mar* 7, 617
    Cyprus—Grant in Aid *Mar* 8, 694
    Distress in Ireland—Relief of *Mar* 7, 603
    Foreign Office *Mar* 5, 429, 430
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    Miscellaneous Legal Expenses *Mar* 7, 579
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    Slave Trade in Zanzibar and Pemba *Mar* 8, 671
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Tennant, Mr. H. J., *Berwickshire*
  Tweed Fishery Acts *Mar* 5, 379

Territorial System—The
  Colonel C. E. Howard Vincent, 1134; Sir H. Fletcher, 1136; Mr. W. St. John Brodrick, 1138, 1139; Mr. H. Campbell-Bannerman, 1139; Mr. A. Morley, 1139—*Mar* 14

Thomas, Mr. Abel, *Carmarthen, E.*
  Established Church (Wales) Bill *Feb* 28, 117

Thomas, Mr. David, *Merthyr Tydvil*
  Bristol Channel Ports *Mar* 18, 1255
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Thomas, Mr. David—*cont.*
  Church of All Hallows *Mar* 18, 1262
  Established Church (Wales) Bill *Feb* 28, 103; *Mar* 18, 1256; *Mar* 19, 1377, 1378; *Mar* 22, 1696

Thorburn, Mr. W., *Peebles and Selkirk*
  Private Bills Procedure (Scotland) *Feb* 28, 20

Thornton, Mr. P. M., *Clapham*
  St. James's Park Ornamental Water, *Mar* 22, 1692

Tomlinson, Mr. W. E. M., *Preston*
  Army Annual Bill 2R. *Mar* 19, 1459
  Burials Bill 2R. *Mar* 6, 485, 486
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  Established Church (Wales) Bill *Feb* 28, 126; *Mar* 21, 1659
  Factories and Workshops Bill—Notice to move Instr. to Com. *Mar* 4, 272
  Grand Juries (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill—In Com *Mar* 6, 523
  Magazine Rifle, The *Mar* 14, 1043
  Rating of Machinery Bill 2R. *Mar* 15, 1244
  Supply
    National Portrait Gallery *Mar* 19, 1440
    Public Education in England and Wales *Mar* 8, 656
    Temporary Commissions—Secondary Education *Mar* 19, 1428, 1435
  Swazis—The *Mar* 14, 1061
  Traders and Railway Rates *Mar* 4, 291
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  Volunteer Camp Canteens *Mar* 14, 1045
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  President—Mr. James Bryce
  Secretary—Mr. Thomas Burt

  Accidents in Industrial Employment, Q. Mr. J. K. Hardie; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 11, 762
  Balfour Group of Companies, Q, Mr. T. G. Bowles; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 21, 1540
  British Trade, Q. Mr. Hobhouse; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 15, 1144
  Boot Trade Dispute, Q. Mr. Aird; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 19, 1371
  Companies Winding-up, Q. Mr. A. Gibbs; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 21, 1539
  Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill (see that Title)
  "*Elbe*" Disaster, *Qs.* Mr. J. C. Macdona, Admiral Field, Mr. Harland; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Feb* 28, 26
  Foreign Subsidies and Free Trade, *Q.* General Goldsworthy; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 18, 1246
  Hours of Signalmen, Q. Mr. Dodd; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 4, 288
  Imported Provisions, *Qs.* Sir J. Kinloch, Mr. A. O'Connor, Mr. Jeffreys; *As.* Mr. Gardner, Mr. Bryce *Mar* 11, 757
  Kitchen Boiler Explosions, Q. Mr. Weir; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 19, 1375
  Lighthouse Expenditure, Q. Mr. J. O'Connor; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 21, 1560

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- *Lighting of the Scotch Coasts*, *Q.* Mr. Weir; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 19, 1375
- *Loss of the*
  - "*Port Yarrock*," *Qs.* Mr. J. H. Wilson; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 12, 875
  - "*Waldridge*," *Q.* Mr. Wyndham; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 15, 1145
- *Margarine*, *Qs.* Mr. W. O'Brien, Mr. J. Lowther; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt *Mar* 19, 1369
- *Ocean Derelicts*, *Q.* Mr. J. C. Macdona; *A.* Mr Bryce *Mar* 4, 284; *Mar* 15, 1150; *Mar* 18, 1254. *Q.* Mr. J. C. Macdona; *A.* Mr. E. Robertson *Mar* 21, 1563
- *Orkney and Shetland Lights*, *Q.* Mr. Shaw-Stewart; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 7, 567
- *Port of Santos*, *Q.* Mr. J. H. Wilson; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 11, 764
- *Railway Servants and Colour Blindness*, *Q.* Sir J. Leng; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 18, 1248
- *Railways* (see that title)
- *Saving Life at Sea*, *Q.* Mr. E. H. Bayley; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Feb* 28, 23
- *Screening Ships Side-lights*, *Qs.* Mr. Bowles; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 15, 1151. *Q.* Sir D. Currie; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 19, 1373
- *Solway and Tweed Fisheries*, *Qs.* Mr Maxwell; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 11, 770
- *Steamship* "*Portuguese Prince*," *Q.* Mr. J. H. Wilson; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 11, 763. *Qs.* Sir E. Hill; *As* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 15, 1149
- *Thurlow (Lord)*, *Q.* Mr. Bowles; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 21, 1550
- *Trade Marks in Argentina*, *Q.* Mr. Hobhouse; *A.* Sir E. Grey *Mar* 15, 1145
- *Trade Unions in the Colonies*, *Q.* Mr. Howell; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Mar* 14, 1037
- *Traders and Railway Rates*, *Q.* Mr. Tomlinson; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 4, 291
- *Tweed Fishery Acts*, *Qs.* Mr. H. J. Tennant, Mr. R. A. Allison, Mr. F. Napier, Sir D. Macfarlane; *Obs.* Dr. MacGregor; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 5, 379. *Q.* Mr. Napier; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 12, 873
- *Weights and Measures Act* (1889), *Q.* Mr. Macdonald; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Mar* 11, 760

Tramways (Ireland) Bill
- *c.* Intro., Sir J. T. Hibbert; Read 1° *Mar* 12, 968

TREVELYAN, RIGHT HON SIR G. O. (Secretary for Scotland), *Glasgow, Bridgeton*
- Afforestation in the Highlands *Mar* 12, 881
- Beam Trawling *Mar* 14, 1039
- Campbeltown School Board *Mar* 7, 560
- Cottars in Lewis *Mar* 21, 1558
- Crofters Act—The *Mar* 11, 772
- Crofters Commission—The *Mar* 12, 888
- County Council Loans *Mar* 11, 768
- Dalmeny and South Queensferry *Mar* 12, 885
- Day and Evening Schools *Mar* 1, 164
- Education Code—The *Feb* 28, 35
- Erbusaig—Ross-shire *Mar* 21, 1559
- Established Church (Wales) Bill *Mar* 22, 1733

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- Falls of Foyers—The *Mar* 7, 543; *Mar* 22, 1688, 1689
- Fife County Boundaries *Mar* 11, 753
- Higher Education in Scotland *Mar* 21, 1541
- Kilninan and Kilmore *Mar* 14, 1057
- Parish Council Elections in Scotland *Mar* 21, 1561
- Private Bills Procedure (Scotland) *Feb* 28, 21
- School Grants to Scotch Parishes *Mar* 7, 546
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  - Feus and Leases *Mar* 7, 567
  - Fishery Boards *Mar* 21, 1545
  - Fishing Harbours *Mar* 21, 1541
  - Legislation *Mar* 14, 1037
  - Salmon Fishing *Mar* 12, 881
  - Standing Committee *Feb* 28, 21
- Shepherds' Children and School Attendance *Mar* 21, 1560
- Steam Trawling in the Highlands *Mar* 19, 1372
- Supply—
  - General Register House, Edinburgh *Mar* 7, 631
  - Local Government Board (Scotland) *Mar* 5, 436, 437, 438
  - Scotch Law Charges *Mar* 7, 621
- Teachers' Superannuation *Mar* 7, 550
- Trawling *Mar* 4, 286
- Universities (Scotland) Act *Feb* 28, 138, 141
- Village of St. Ninians—The *Mar* 7, 562
- Voters' Grievance—A *Mar* 21, 1550
- Western Highlands and Islands Works Act *Mar* 21, 1558, 1559

Truck Acts Amendment Bill
- 1R. Mr. Asquith *(Motion)*, 204; Mr. Tomlinson, 205—*Mar* 1
- Pres. and Read 1° *Mar* 1, 206

Tuberculosis (Bovine)—Commission on
- *Q.* Mr. Hayden; *A.* Sir J. T. Hibbert *Mar* 12, 871

TULLY, Mr. J., *Leitrim, S.*
- Distress in
  - Bawnboy Union *Mar* 18, 1260
  - Leitrim *Mar* 14, 1033
- Land Law (Ireland) Act (1881), *Mar* 11, 767
- Navigation of the Shannon *Mar* 19, 1361
- Relief Works in Ireland *Mar* 14, 1043; *Mar* 15, 1156
- Road Contracts in Ireland *Mar* 11, 767

TWEEDMOUTH, LORD (Lord Privy Seal and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster)
- Alteration of Scottish Boundaries *Mar* 11, 743
- Distribution of Parish Councillors (Scotland) *Mar* 11, 747, 748
- Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Bill 2R. *Mar* 4, 242, 249, 251, 252, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261
- Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill 2R. *Mar* 4, 262, 263, 264

Unemployed
  Committee, Mr. Acland brought up Report from Select Committee *Mar* 11, 856
  Gloucester, *Q.* Sir T. Robinson : *A.* Mr. Shaw Lefevre *Feb* 28, 39

Unification of London
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